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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Politics and the Arts—October 18, 1975, 50 cents

Double Agents—*Gary T. Marx*
Lisbon & Brussels—*Daniel Yergin*
Remembering Hugo Black—*Max Lerner*
Stymied Farm Democrats—*Joel Solkoff*
Three to Go—*John Osborne*
Kenneth Burke's Novel—*Denis Donoghue*
Friends of the IRA—*The Editors*
Tax Trickery—*TRB*
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TRB

from Washington ®
October 18, 1975

Mr. Veto

The nation has taken all the shocks and excitements it wants. It would like to give a big yawn and watch the World Series. In normal times Mr. Ford would be just the man for it, relaxed and easy. The commonplace qualities that Democrats sneer at are just right for calmer times. Democrats charge he will be defeated because he's dull. Nonsense! If we could just get America back to normalcy, presidential dullness would be extolled; Republicans would sport bumperstickers, "Stay Bored With Ford!" and win a landslide.

The hitch is, of course, that times aren't normal. The President can bombinate all over America denouncing "swollen federal bureaucracy" and telling GOP women's groups, "I'm going to free American business from the shackles of government over-regulation," and most people just say, "So what?" They are frustrated and a little frightened over bread-and-butter realities.

The activist Democratic majorities are throwing bills at the reluctant President and it is showing up in the remarkable veto record, 39 vetoes. There has never been a similar 14 months' period in modern history. Just last week Senate and House overrode the veto of the $2.75 billion child nutrition law with lopsided majorities (Senate 79-13; House 297-18) and most Republicans deserted the White House. It's worthwhile to compare this with veto records of Presidents going back to 1929: Mr. Ford has already cast more vetoes than Kennedy in three years (21), Hoover in four years (37) and Johnson in five years (30). Since 1929 the record shows that he has been overriden by Congress more times than any President but Truman and Roosevelt (FDR nine times in 12 years; Ford seven times in little over a year.) Mr. Ford's percentage of overrides is an unparalleled 17.9 percent. Presidents Johnson and Kennedy were not overriden at all; FDR's percentage was only 1.4 percent. This does not mean a President should not veto, nor a Congress override, but Mr. Ford's singular record is a significant symbol of the times.

It tells a story of an extraordinary and growing confrontation. Mr. Ford is the veto President. Nobody can doubt that he is sincere in his economy drive and one admires his doggedness; furthermore nobody loves his opponent, Congress. But the whole economic postulate on which he operates goes back to Hoover. The huge deficit that alarms him so much is primarily due to the recession—lost revenue and swelling unemployment insurance—but he never seems to grasp the fact or doesn't mention it. His crusade doesn't seem to be catching on and more and more his speeches sound like an underdog candidate in the last month of a presidential campaign that is actually 13 months away.

Tax Trickery

Last week Mr. Ford proposed a tax reduction that he called "the biggest single tax cut in our history" if Congress would cut an equivalent amount, $28 billion, dollar for dollar, from expenditures. We must make, he said, "a fundamental decision about our nation's future" and today we stand at a "crossroads in our history." Generally America stands at a crossroads of history only in election week.

Anyway, the figures were incorrect, and the proposal was a chimera. Congress made $17 billion in anti-recessionary tax cuts last March and the President went along with it, dragging Treasury Secretary Simon behind him. The issue in Washington today is whether the tax cut will be continued; the President added $11 billion to the $17 billion already in effect and claimed that he was offering $28 billion, which was the "biggest in history," he said, provided Congress went along with the deal, which of course it won't. It was disingenuous; it was a trick, a propaganda gimmick. The temporary tax cut expires in January so that if it is to be continued (as it is virtually certain to be, and Congress will pass it anyway if Mr. Ford vetoes) it must be done before January. The President doesn't send up his own budget message till the end of January presumably telling where he wants to make those $28 billion cuts, and even an all-Republican Congress couldn't enact them in less than a year. The President's ploy is so clumsy that it is embarrassing; it recalls all those Ford WIN buttons.

There is some evidence of dissension within the administration. It makes the Democratic leadership happy but is bad news for the country. The surest evidence that Democrats think they smell victory next year is the number of candidates, by latest count about a dozen. There is no front-runner yet and a lot of people are thinking maybe it will be a retread, bubbling Hubert Humphrey, who is the least disliked alternative to everyone else.

A number of differences among presidential counsellors have surfaced recently: Defense Secretary Schlesinger slapped down Kissinger's idea of Pershing Missiles for Israel (capable of carrying nuclear warheads); Vice President Rockefeller virtually told Simon to get off the team if he couldn't accept the President's proposed $100 billion energy agency (which Rocky invented); Labor Secretary Dunlop wants to rescue New York City while Simon says its default would be "tolerable and temporary." The administration is split on the tax cut, Dunlop for it (how did he ever get into this crowd?), the usual Simon-Greenspan bloc against and Mr. Ford in doubt: does his $28 billion ploy mean he's for it or against? See the next episode.

Mr. Ford's favorite target is Big Government and nobody can say he is inconsistent for as congressman he voted against school aid, medicare, urban renewal and price supports for farmers. "I see our people making their own decisions rather than abdicating their future to the massive Big Brother structure," he tells business audiences. Reporters note that subsequent questions from the floor are often for government aid.

The President really feels government can be scaled down. Simon calls the food stamp program "a well-known haven for chiselers and rip-off artists," and Mr. Ford is cool to the increasingly alarming crisis in New York City. Yet there are exceptions. Penn Central, Pan Am, Lockheed, Franklin National and the rest love free enterprise, but when misfortune strikes they give trusting little hands to Mummy Government.

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Friends of The IRA

One afternoon early this September a bomb exploded in the lobby of the Hilton Hotel in London, killing two, injuring scores more. Almost 300 Americans were staying in the hotel at that time; it was only an accident that hundreds were not killed. The bomb was one of a series planted in the London area by the Provisional Irish Republican Army—whether on orders from the leadership of the Provisionals or a semi-independent unit is not clear.

It costs money to run a terrorist organization. The current bombing campaign, like so much else of the bad works of the Provisional IRA, may well have been financed out of the wallets of some Irish-Americans who, along with Col. Gaddafi of Libya and Gen. Amin of Uganda, belong to that dwindling number who believe that "British imperialism" is of any significance in the modern world. Insofar as Ireland is concerned, they are 50 years out of date. So are the members of the two branches—Official and Provisional—of the Irish Republican Army. Both branches continue to believe that the problem in Northern Ireland is the British presence. On the contrary, the real problem is the conflict between the bigots among the extreme Protestants and Catholics, particularly the IRA itself and Protestant paramilitary groups that are intent on preventing any peaceful solution to the conflict.

The current chain of bombings in London is only an echo of what is happening in Ulster, which is gripped by a horrifying vendetta culture motivated by a depth of hatred and a glory in killing that is incomprehensible to an outsider. The two sides, the IRA and the militant Protestants, wage war not only against each other but also against the entire population. The totals for Northern Ireland are staggering—more than 1300 deaths on all sides since 1969, and more than 13,000 injuries. The latest twist is an increase in "sectarian killing"—the arbitrary murder of innocent Catholics and Protestants—gasoline station attendants, motorists, pedestrians, pop singers—in alleged revenge for the equally arbitrary murder of other Catholics and Protestants. In addition, the Provisionals have engaged in a series of bombing campaigns within England, killing 52 and injuring 1000 since 1972. The current Provisional campaign in London is linked to a new "limited offensive" they have opened: one day alone, September 22, the Provisional IRA set off 20 bombs throughout Ulster.

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The ascendancy of the terrorists, particularly the IRA, is to a significant degree made possible by large subsidies from Irish-Americans in the United States. The full extent of the assistance is unknown. But the files of the Foreign Agents' Registration Office in Washington, DC suggest that the aid must be very large. One of the major fund-raising groups, NorAid (the Irish Northern Aid Committee) officially declared that it had remitted $823,000 to Ireland between 1971 and 1973. Between January 1974 and January 1975, it declared an additional $213,000. One of the two chief recipients of their money was Joe Cahill, known as the Provisional "quartermaster" until his arrest in 1973 by the Irish Navy while in the process of running guns into Ireland. It is said that much more of the money raised in the United States, far beyond what is officially reported, never leaves the country, but is spent on the purchase of guns and other weapons, which in turn are smuggled to gunmen in Ireland. At least 75 percent of IRA armaments are American-made. In the last eight months the Provisionalists apparently built up new stockpiles of weapons from the US, including gelignite explosives and armalite rifles.

NorAid raises its money from a variety of sources, social events in the Irish community, a few wealthy supporters, collection cans in bars bearing such labels as "Help Stop British Torture in Ireland." The money supposedly pays for "relief work" among the Catholics of Northern Ireland. In truth the money appears destined to support the activities of the Provisional IRA, the chief terrorist organization.

Some of the American fund-raisers have admitted at least part of this association. Brian McCusker, a NorAid official, was recently interviewed for a television documentary broadcast by the Thames Network in Britain. "I support the Provisional IRA, I support their policy, the Provisional IRA policy which is the ultimate liberation of Ireland, the 32-county concept under a federal Ireland," he said. "It is *the* only solution to the Irish problem." Did he support the Provisionals' use of violence, which seems to be the organization's only policy? "I support the use of violence to achieve that end, yes."

While McCusker blandly denied that any NorAid money went for arms, Paul O'Dwyer, New York City Council president, and a director of the Irish National Caucus, was somewhat franker about the assistance from the US. Asked on the same broadcast if any of the money raised in the US went to the Provisionals, he replied, "Oh, yes, I would think so." To purchase guns? "I wouldn't have any doubt about that." O'Dwyer was also asked if he supported the Provisionals. "I don't condemn them. I consider the Provisionals as a logical outcome of oppression, and the Provisionals are no different from the American revolutionaries that we are going to celebrate, 200 years ago."

It seems that many in the Irish-American community have bought this romantic and dangerous nonsense. The Provisionals are not freedom fighters; they are tough terrorists who have found their purpose and importance in fighting a battle against British domination—which is not the issue today in Northern Ireland. The Provisional and regular IRA do not enjoy any significant following in the government of the independent Republic of Ireland in the south; their candidates regularly win only a small percentage of the votes in any election. In the north, the majority of Catholic voters supports the nonviolent Social Democratic and Labour party.

Many Americans who contribute to the IRA would be surprised to learn that their funds are going to organizations dedicated to Marxist socialism. Of course, the IRA groups have gone out of their way to disguise this fact. Former IRA activist Maria Maguire, in her book, *To Take Arms,* recounts how IRA fund-raisers, when sent to the United States, were told to drop all their references to socialism and all of their criticisms of the Roman Catholic Church. But, in fact, the official IRA maintains close links with Moscow-oriented Communist parties. It pays no attention to the genuine Soviet oppression of its minorities, and one of its journals actually sought to justify the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. The Provisional IRA maintains active links with various Third World revolutionaries in Europe and the Middle East.

Most interesting is its friendship with Libya. "We support the revolutionaries of Ireland who oppose Britain and are motivated by nationalism and religion," Col. Gaddafi has declared over Libyan radio. "The Libyan Arab Republic has stood by the revolutionaries of Ireland . . . There are arms and there is support for the revolutionaries of Ireland." Soviet-made rocket launchers used in Northern Ireland apparently reached the Provisionals from the Middle East, probably through Libya. Concrete proof came when the Irish Navy captured the Cypriot freighter *Claudia* in the process of attempting to smuggle $80,000 worth of arms into Ireland. Among those arrested was Joe Cahill, the designated co-recipient for NorAid's funds until 1973. The arms were Libyan. (The depth of Col. Gaddafi efforts to best 'British imperialism' should not be underestimated—of late he has also been flirting with some of the extreme Protestants).

The IRA has found a very powerful appeal for the Irish-Americans. It has called up the ghost of the Irish Revolution of 1916 and wins dollars and supporters by portraying itself as fighting British oppression. This is a fantasy. The British gain nothing by sending their troops to Northern Ireland. It costs Britain over one billion dollars a year in subsidy to keep apart the extremists and prevent civil war. The real oppression in Northern Ireland comes from the unholy alliance of extremists on both sides who terrify the inhabitants with fake visions of apocalypse and genuine violence.

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Newspaper editorials in London declare more frequently these days that Britain cannot simply foresake Northern Ireland, wish a plague on all extremists and withdraw. It is an indication that public sentiment is leaning in this direction. However, such a walk-out would not be a liberation, but rather a disaster, not only for the 1.5 million people of Ulster, but also for those in the Republic of Ireland. A protracted war would follow, economic life would cease, and when the shooting was over, the Marxist commonwealth of the IRA would undoubtedly be no closer to realization than before. Conor Cruise O'Brien, a cabinet minister in the Republic of Ireland, earlier this year warned Americans who "think of themselves as friends of Ireland" that a British withdrawal would mean "a shattering civil war in Ireland, bringing different forms of disastrous consequences on all parts of the country and on all sections of the population."

A few extremists are beginning to recognize the truth of this prediction. The latest British-sponsored effort to find a formula for power-sharing, a constitutional convention, has been stalemated by failure of the Catholic's Social Democratic and Labour party—the bravest group of all—and the Protestants' United Ulster Coalition to reach an agreement. In mid-September, however, William Craig, till now one of the hardest of the hard-line Protestants, suddenly endorsed power-sharing as an emergency measure. This was a dramatic turn-around for Craig. "It was because I recognized the sincerity of the SDLP," he explained. It was also because he recognized that a failure of this convention might well bring much closer the day of British withdrawal, to be followed by all-out civil war. Other hard-line Protestant leaders like the Rev. Ian Paisley, however, still live in their dream world, ranting about the "Papists," digging themselves into their bunkers. Paisley, with help from the mercurial racist Enoch Powell, has succeeded in isolating Craig.

At the same time, the Provisional IRA does everything it can to undercut progress toward power-sharing. Their tool continues to be violence. In addition to their share of sectarian murder, they have opened their "limited offensive" in Ireland and in London to cut the ground out from the moderates and frustrate any move toward a settlement. IRA violence not only kills and maims, but also provides ammunition for those extreme Protestants who stand just as firmly and violently against power-sharing.

A somewhat clearer recognition of the Provisionals' true character caused some US congressional supporters of the Catholic minority in Ulster, including Sen. Edward Kennedy, to refrain from supporting the IRA. However many Americans still fail to understand that contributions to the IRA help none of the people of Northern Ireland, Catholic or Protestant, but rather provide the financial wherewithal for civil war. How much better if, the next time the collection box came around, the donors listened not to the myths but to the truth. Officials of the independent Republic of Ireland, which disowns the IRA completely, tried to get that message across. Money sent from America to the Provisionals, the foreign minister of the Irish Republic, Garret Fitzgerald, said, "helps to finance murder, sowing bitter seeds of dissension among Irishmen. It assists in the effort to subvert democracy in Ireland and may yet precipitate a holocaust of immeasurable proportions. . . . Hundreds of the deaths in Northern Ireland have resulted from the money collected in the United States being used for the purchase of guns by the Irish Republican Army. . . . Every dollar bill contributed to agencies such as the Irish Northern Aid Committee contributes to the killing of Irish people."

But the message does not get across. On another occasion, Fitzgerald pointed out that if an African country should be sending arms and money "to, say, the Black Panthers or an organization like that in America," many of the Irish-Americans who support the IRA "would resent this very bitterly." But, he said, "they do the same thing to us in Ireland."

Productivity

The National Commission on Productivity was born in 1970. In 1974 it became the National Commission on Productivity and Quality of Work. This year, in deference to labor participants, it became the National Commission on Productivity and the Quality of Working Life. Its leadership has changed almost as frequently as its title. The first executive director quit because Congress refused to take the commission seriously and wouldn't appropriate what he considered adequate funds. For a time, it merged with the Cost of Living Council and nearly disappeared. Now suddenly it looks strong and quite healthy. It has a new chairman with clout: Nelson Rockefeller. And a bill doubling the annual appropriation and staff of the commission passed the Senate this fall and is expected to pass the House. Soon, with an annual endowment of five to 10 million dollars, the commission will have a safe perch in the rookery of helpful federal advisers that live in Washington, DC, right alongside the National Commission on Gambling (literally two doors down the hall), the Franklin Roosevelt Memorial Commission, the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission and many others.

Emery Dobbins, director of communications, discussed last week what the commission does. "There's been a lot of talk about this being a do-nothing commission. Well, that just isn't so," Dobbins said. "Congress just thinks you can push a button and get

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results." Dobbins explained that "we think it will take five to 10 years to even make a dent in the situation. Nothing is going to happen immediately." What is the problem the commission hopes to solve? The rate of productivity in the US, as measured in goods produced per manhours worked, has been declining since 1973, a sign that American industry is becoming feeble. More significant, the rate of increase in productivity has been lower in the US for the last 20 years than it has been in other industrial nations. This is said to contribute to loss of trade, inflation and unemployment. The commission hopes to reverse the curve, or at least stop its decline.

Dobbins suggested that the reason Europeans and the Japanese were "whipping" their American competitors is that they have had well-funded, well-staffed productivity commissions for many years. He said that after World War II, the US made it a condition of its generosity under the Marshall Plan that any government receiving aid would have to establish a national productivity commission. Now, he believes, America must follow its own advice and copy the Europeans and Japanese. The major difference between productivity commissions abroad and the one in the US, he said, is that foreign governments refuse to allow their commissions to review the productivity of government. The US commission intends to devote much of its time to government productivity problems. So far, however, the commission has kept a safe distance from the federal government; for the time being it's leaving that to Congress. It has given advice to state and local governments.

The productivity commission, Dobbins said, does not try to measure workers' output and hold them to a standard. That would be primitive. Rather, it suggests new ideas, new solutions to problems that management and labor leaders might not think of on their own. It has printed a score of pamphlets providing such advice as how to run a police, fire or sanitation department efficiently and in a way that will share decision-making with lowly workers. In its own terms, the commission hopes to "remove obstacles to greater productivity" and to end the "adversary relationship" between labor and management. To this end, it encourages big industries to shift the authority to make important decisions away from local plant managers to the board of directors. Directors have more foresight. And it encourages the creation of joint labor-management committees, so that labor leaders will become involved in managerial decision-making.

The commission apparently does a bit of discreet trust building as well. For example, Dobbins explained, the commission discovered that because of tedious regulations and petty competition, it took 12 days to ship vegetables from the west to east coast by rail—a trip that took only eight days in 1910. The commission drew together the heads of the industries involved—growers, truckers, wholesalers, supermarket and railroad owners—and had them make commitments to one another that they'd previously been afraid to make for fear they would violate antitrust laws. Nothing was filed on paper: "We studiously avoid that," Dobbins said. But informal agreements on procedures were kept by the various parties, and now the transcontinental shipping of vegetables is just as efficient as in the days of the great railroad barons. The commission hopes to do the same kind of good work for other railroads, the airlines, hospitals and construction companies.

Eliot Marshall

White House Watch

Three to Go

Three of the President's assistants are leaving him and taking other government jobs. Their experience at the White House and the circumstances of their departures tell quite a lot about how Mr. Ford uses his staff and how his staff serves him.

Stanley S. Scott, aged 42, was Richard Nixon's second in-house black and has served Gerald Ford in that capacity, with the title of special assistant, since Mr. Ford became President. Scott is to be assistant administrator of the Agency for International Development, overseeing US economic aid to the countries of black Africa. His predecessor in that job, Samuel C. Adams, Jr., was one of the first black career officers in the US Foreign Service and retired September 27 after 25 years in government. Scott's predecessor at the White House, Robert Brown, quit and was succeeded by Scott on February 5, 1973, during the mad turnover of White House and other presidential appointees with which Richard Nixon celebrated his reelection in 1972. About all that Stan Scott and Bob Brown had in common was that both of them were black Republicans. Brown came from a poor North Carolina family and worked his way up to moderate affluence in the public relations business to which he returned when he left the White House. Scott comes from a wealthy family of Southern newspaper publishers. He worked for the family's *Atlanta Daily World*, ran its *Memphis World*, and was a NAACP public relations man and broadcast reporter before he joined the White House staff in June, 1971, as an assistant to communications director Herbert Klein.

Watergate was just beginning to close in upon President Nixon when Scott became his special assistant and the two were never close, officially or personally. Mr. Nixon, ever the recluse, wasn't very close to Bob Brown, either, but they were accustomed to each other and got along pretty well. Scott did what he could for the President in the way of maintaining the

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relatively little rapport with black communities, black politicians and black leaders that Brown had been able to establish. But Scott came into his own and began to feel that he was really valued at the White House only after Gerald Ford succeeded to the presidency. They hit it off from the day that Mr. Ford took office as the first appointed Vice President. Only one of the 17 black members of the House of Representatives who were then in office, Scott's friend Andrew Young of Atlanta, had voted to confirm Gerald Ford's nomination to the vice presidency. "This President needed help and knew it," Scott recalls, and the first quarter in which Scott proceeded to provide the needed help was the Congressional Black Caucus. It had taken Richard Nixon more than a year to get around to a meeting with the Black Caucus, at its request. Scott arranged an early meeting between President Ford and the caucus and the relationship, though hardly warm, continues to be better than it was in the Nixon time. According to Scott, President Ford had more encounters with black groups and individuals during his first 14 months than President Nixon had in five years.

Yet there were some odd and revealing differences between the experience of Brown and Scott under President Nixon and Scott's experience under President Ford. Brown or somebody from his staff frequently attended Nixon Cabinet meetings and Scott did so after he succeeded Brown. Scott has never attended or been invited to a Ford Cabinet meeting. Scott was on Capitol Hill calling on senators who will be voting for or against his nomination as assistant AID administrator, when the President held his latest Cabinet meeting on October 8. As assistant to Herbert Klein and later to President Nixon, Scott never had any trouble getting to that President's two staff chiefs, H. R. Haldeman and Gen. Alexander Haig, when he needed to. He's just about given up trying to get in touch, by telephone or in person, with Mr. Ford's chief of staff, Donald Rumsfeld. Good and close though his personal and working relationship with Mr. Ford has been, Scott has found the going rough when he has to deal with the Ford staff in general. Scott is known to share the opinion of the White House assistant who says of Don Rumsfeld, unfairly in my judgment: "He's another Bob Haldeman, only he smiles."

Roderick M. Hills, aged 44, is leaving the White House staff to be chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission after six months as the junior of two attorneys who hold the title of Counsel to the President. The senior Counsel is Mr. Ford's first law partner and friend of many years from Grand Rapids, Philip Buchen. Buchen's first deputy, Phillip Areeda of the Harvard Law School, lasted an even shorter time at the White House than Hills did. Areeda left in part because he didn't get the job he wanted, which was executive director of the Domestic Council, a post that went instead to Vice President Rockefeller's assistant and protégé, James Cannon. Hills is leaving because the President and a lot of other people, including Secretary of the Treasury William Simon, Chairman Alan Greenspan of the Council of Economic Advisers, and numerous brokers and others in the investment business would rather have him in the SEC chairmanship than the principal competitor for that position, SEC member A. A. Sommer, Jr., a Democrat who was strongly recommended to the President by the outgoing chairman, Ray Garrett, Jr.

Both Garrett, a Republican, and Sommer took office the same day—August 6, 1973. A story accepted as true in the investment world but not confirmed at the White House is that Garrett, a Chicago lawyer and former member of the SEC staff, had an understanding with President Nixon that Sommer would be appointed chairman midway in his and Garrett's terms. Sommer is a Cleveland attorney with an extensive background in the investment business that Hills cannot claim, though Hills has represented clients in complicated SEC proceedings. Sommer's advent to the chairmanship was feared and opposed, and prevented by the President, for two reasons, one general and one specific. Sommer is known as a shaker-upper, an advocate of change in a world that detests change. Specifically, he is assumed to favor either abolition or drastic modification of the New York Stock Exchange's precious Rule 394, which used to make it virtually impossible and still makes it difficult for member brokers to buy or sell NYSE listed securities on any other exchange. The conventional Wall Street view is that the New York exchange would collapse without Rule 394 or a reasonable facsimile of it. Hills said in effect at the Senate hearing on his nomination that he has an open mind on the issue, which comes to hearing before the SEC on October 14. He plans to attend the hearings on 394 as an observer and to move into the chairmanship on November 1.

In his six months at the White House, Hills established himself as a star performer in that rather drably staffed institution. He was best known to the public and to Washington reporters, a few of whom he trusted and assisted to an extent that is far from common at the allegedly open Ford White House, as the staff attorney mainly responsible for handling the President's difficult problems with the Senate and House select committees investigating US intelligence agencies. Frederick A. O. Schwarz, Jr., chief counsel to the Senate committee, is among many people who consider that Hills did a good and honorable job for the President with that committee and its staff. Hills is the first to acknowledge that he didn't do so well with Rep. Otis Pike's House committee and blames himself for failing to awake as soon as he should have to the problems it posed. A less noted but more burdensome role was his assignment to coordinate the President's program of regulatory reform, which I discussed in this journal's previous issue.

It's practically illegal to mention Rod Hills in print

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without noting that his wife, like him a former Los Angeles attorney, is the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. Sen. William Proxmire, who presided at the committee hearing on Hills' nomination, pounced upon this fact in a particularly nasty variation of his niggling objection to providing senior federal officials with chauffeured automobiles. Proxmire made Hills promise to ride to work at the SEC in his wife's limousine or else drive his own car. A more pertinent fact is that Carla Hills had a good deal to do with Hills' willingness to leave the White House. He is among the many who think it quite likely that she will be the first woman appointed to the US Supreme Court, when and if President Ford has a vacancy to fill. Roderick Hills doesn't want to be on the President's staff, and therefore subject to suspicion that he influenced the appointment, when and if it occurs.

Soon after Richard Dunham, aged 45, was transferred from Vice President Rockefeller's staff to the White House staff as one of two deputy directors of the Domestic Council, a ranking assistant to the President said to him: "We understand that your loyalty is to the Vice President." Dunham snapped in reply: "Now just a minute! I'm not the Vice President's man any more; I'm the President's man." Like his immediate superior and former associate on the Rockefeller staffs in New York State and then in Washington, James Cannon, Dunham since March has in a sense been both the President's man and the Vice President's man. He probably would say of that dual loyalty what Cannon said about his relationship with Rockefeller after he, Cannon, was appointed assistant to the President for domestic affairs and director of the Domestic Council: "He is there when I need him and I am here when he needs me."

Dunham, a deputy director and director of the budget in New York State when Rockefeller was governor, has had overall responsibility for policy formulation on the Domestic Council staff. The second deputy, James Cavanaugh, a Nixon veteran, has handled day-to-day council operations. Now Dunham is to be chairman of the Federal Power Commission. A businessman (computer data processing) before he joined the Rockefeller administration in New York, he is the first non-lawyer in many years to be FPC chairman and also the first chairman in a long while who has had no particular experience with or in utilities. The short explanation of why he is going to FPC, and why Roderick Hills is going to SEC, was stated by the President when he said recently that if these and other regulatory commissions don't cooperate in chopping back federal regulation, "we'll change the commissions." The remark borders upon improper invasion of independent regulatory agencies by the executive, but Mr. Ford has got away with it so far. Dunham says that neither the President, Donald Rumsfeld, presidential personnel director Douglas Bennett, nor anyone else at the White House asked him before he was nominated about his views of FPC regulation and, most especially, whether he agrees with Mr. Ford's emphatically expressed determination to abolish federal control of the rates charged for natural gas in interstate commerce. Dunham assumes that the President knew that he does agree.

A natural assumption is that Rockefeller recommended Dunham for the FPC and that the appointment constitutes an extension of Rockefeller influence. According to Dunham, the Vice President met him in an Executive Office Building hall a week or so after Dunham was offered the job and said, "I hear you've been offered a place on some regulatory commission." Dunham told him it was the FPC.

John Osborne

Of Double Agents And Revolving Doors

by Gary T. Marx

The arrest of Sara Jane Moore and revelations about the informant role she apparently played for at least four law enforcement agencies suggest the complex interdependencies that sometimes exist between authorities and the politically dissident. There is a marvelous irony (and, to some, poetic justice) in the fact that so many of those who begin as officially sanctioned betrayers end by betraying the authorities who put them up to it. How could it be otherwise, given the psychological characteristics of those drawn to such

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work, the inherent secrecy, the official sponsorship of immoral and illegal behavior with the implicit acceptance of the idea that glorious ends justify questionable means, and the frequent gap between a J. Edgar Hoover-inspired view of dissent and reality.

The Moore case is the latest in a series of bizarre events that have made the last decade so implausible.

Patty Hearst is kidnapped by the Symbionese Liberation Army. There is suspicion in some circles that its leader, Donald D. De Freeze, had worked for the criminal conspiracy section of the Los Angeles police department. In his first arrest De Freeze informed on a confederate involved with him in the theft of guns from a Los Angeles sporting goods store. Sara Jane Moore, an accountant with a big income, volunteers to help in the food distribution program that is part of the ransom asked by the SLA for the release of Patty. Sara Jane Moore is approached by authorities and begins informing on SLA sympathizers and others in the Northern California radical milieu. Patty Hearst converts to the SLA. She is then hidden by Jack Scott, who had earlier undergone a metamorphosis from a conservative Goldwater supporter to a radical leftist. Scott's brother then seems to have informed on him. Sara Jane Moore, while not converting to the SLA, comes to see "Tom," an SLA sympathizer she was asked by the FBI to inform on, as "so nice, such a good dedicated person. He wasn't at all as they had pictured him—evil incarnate, a dupe, a spy in the pay of Red China or Russia." Moore comes to define herself as a radical. She publicly denounces her previous informing, yet continues to give information to various law enforcement agencies. Sara Jane Moore, who now favors Socialist revolution, purchases a gun from a collector who is a member of the John Birch Society and who reports that he favors peaceful change through "legislation and discussion, not through secret stupid armies." At one of her visits to the gun dealer she is accompanied by a treasury agent, perhaps drawn by the possibility of catching the dealer in an illegal act as a result of information supplied by Moore. In spite of what would seem to be obvious reason to keep her under surveillance, Moore is able to buy another gun. In the face of exceptionally heavy security, following the attempted assassination two weeks before, she is able to point her gun at the President and pull the trigger. The gun dealer thinks he originally purchased this gun from an undercover treasury agent who may have been trying to set him up in an illegal arms transaction.

A well-to-do 45-year-old accountant with an expensive house in the suburbs, Sara Jane Moore was hardly a typical informant either in terms of age or social background. Yet in her personality, behavior and career as an informant, she is all too typical, in her isolation and strong need for acceptance, her desire for public attention, her apparent instability, her prior experiences in deception (her use of assumed names and false documents) and her interest in acting, her initial recruitment from an appeal to patriotic motives, her curiosity about radicals, her ability to offer financial and organizational resources to the movement, her taking of extreme action to establish credibility and her seeking to play the role of double agent following a conversion experience.

The assassin as informer is not a new phenomenon. Among the most interesting cases is that of Aseff, a Russian police agent for 15 years, five of which were spent as head of what historian Boris Nikolaevsky in 1934 called "the largest and most important terrorist organization known to history." While Aseff betrayed a large number of acts, he also arranged for a series of terrorist activities that included the assassination of Plehve, the minister of the interior and the Grand Duke Sergei, and an attempt against the Tsar, the failure of which was not Aseff's fault.

Closer to home, a former Texas attorney general claimed that Lee Harvey Oswald had served as an FBI informant. Like Sara Jane Moore, Oswald may have offered at least some indirect warning of his future actions. Some accounts suggest that shortly before the Kennedy assassination he wrote a threatening letter to the Dallas police and to the FBI.

The parallels between Moore and Dmitri Bogrov, a Russian double agent, are even more striking. In 1911 Bogrov killed Premier Stolypin at the theater in Kiev. He had previously warned the police of a plan to assassinate Stolypin, though he failed to tell them that he was to carry it out. After a brief investigation, police discounted his story and gave him a ticket to attend the theater.

Sara Jane Moore wasn't taken very seriously by authorities either, in spite of her warnings. She told a San Francisco police inspector that she wanted to attend a speech by President Ford to "test the system," a federal agent accompanied her when she paid for one of her guns, and she seemed to be in daily contact with authorities. Yet a secret service spokesman reported that Moore was not considered psychologically capable of assassination "and not of sufficient protective importance" to be watched or kept in custody.

She might have been put under surveillance, or held had she been a man. Similarly greater attention might have been paid to her had she not been thought to be cooperating with authorities. Certainly those who can turn on friends and acquaintances in a social movement are equally capable of turning on authorities.

In her shift from an agent to an attacker of the government Sara Jane Moore illustrates a common theme in the murky informant netherworld. Indeed about 10 of more than 40 recent American cases involving informants and agents provocateurs also

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seem to have involved conversion, or at least enough disenchantment on the agents' part to disavow their past actions. The left needs a better source of recruits.

Among well-known historic examples of the phenomenon are Father Gapon, a police agent and key figure in the 1905 uprising in Russia who became radicalized in the process, and Roman Malinovsky, a police agent known as operative "X," who became a leading Bolshevik member of the Duma.

In recent times it's happened with some idealistic members of the FBI, CIA or local police, who resign jobs in disillusionment or ask to be transferred out of intelligence activities. Former FBI agent Robert Wall, for example, came to question the FBI's priorities, and especially its ways of dealing with leftist and black groups. He resigned after working three years on radical groups; he said that in that time he had come across no evidence that would lead to convictions for criminal violence. Philip Agee, in *Inside the Company*, describes his disgust at the counterinsurgency tactics of the CIA in Latin America and the course he traversed from conservative Catholic CIA agent to revolutionary Socialist. Douglas Durham, a former Des Moines policeman and highly paid FBI informant, became security director of the American Indian Movement and chief aide and confidant of Dennis Banks, its co-leader. Durham sees his past actions as "definitely wrong" and came to see AIM as a "social organization that does not do anything illegal." In commenting on illegal FBI actions involving AIM he reports, "It's hard for me to believe that the FBI, which I have revered for so long, has stooped so low." In another case four soldiers who had gone as undercover military intelligence agents to the UFO coffeehouse in Columbia, South Carolina, later testified for the defense.

Changes in allegiance have occurred in middle Americans with patriotic motives who volunteer to help the government and are then appalled by what they say they've been asked to do.

David Sannes for example, is a veteran who had worked in counterintelligence for the National Security Agency and volunteered to help the FBI solve a series of Seattle bombings. He describes planning a bombing incident with the FBI and his convincing five people "who claimed to be revolutionaries" that if they really were revolutionaries they ought to carry out the bombing. The Seattle Evergreen Point Bridge was to be bombed in such a way as to not seriously damage the bridge, while the person who actually placed the explosive device would be killed in a booby-trapped explosion when he set the timer. Sannes broke with the FBI over this and filed an affidavit on behalf of the Seattle 8. He reported, "I was involved in an FBI conspiracy to obstruct justice in three important radical cases in the Seattle area. And that seemed just a little odd. Specifically that the FBI which is sworn to uphold the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, was systematically attempting to obstruct justice and to defy the provisions of the Bill of Rights. . . . It was my understanding from the outset that I would have to become involved in actually committing some illegal actions in order to gain credibility as a revolutionary. It was not my understanding from the outset, however, that I would actually be recruiting people to commit bombings that would be carried through, as later became the case."

COMING: Tad Szulc on
mending our fences
in Latin America

Similar in some ways is Don Meinshausen, a college student from a conservative, religious and strongly anti-Communist background who has revealed how he started an SDS chapter at his New Jersey college in order to keep tabs on the left and "prevent" a student takeover of buildings. He reported to HUAC. Yet in the process he came to enjoy the youth culture and reported finding ". . . good kids in SDS, kids that really seemed committed to the movement and really wanted to do good things." He came to consider himself "a part of the movement." Conversations with Karl Hess, the former Goldwater aide turned left libertarian, helped him clarify his politics. The night before Meinshausen was to testify before the House Internal Security Committee (formerly HUAC) as a friendly witness on his activities as a paid infiltrator of SDS activities, he drafted a statement condemning the committee. However he did not get a chance to read it, as committee staff members hearing of his apostasy cancelled the hearing.

The moralism that propels some people toward a crusade against subversion may generate equal indignation against authorities when it turns out that they sometimes lie, have a distorted image of a group trying to do good, and do many of the same things they accuse dissidents of doing.

Less dramatically, informants may surface in anger and disillusionment when authorities are seen to break agreements. Initial police claims that they are only seeking information may prove to be incorrect. Police promises to intervene before a crime is committed, to protect an informant's identity, to protect the informant from prosecution, or not to ask an informant to testify against, or be involved in the arrest of, anyone he or she knows, may not be honored. The agent may feel authorities do not sufficiently value his or her efforts. Discounting an agent's more exaggerated claims, or rejecting an agent's report about the true nature of a group may lead to the agent's estrangement.

Robert W. Hardy, a former marine and FBI informer played a major role in the effort of Catholic antiwar

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activists to destroy draft records in Camden, New Jersey. To a faltering group he provided leadership, maps of the target, instructions and supplies, and transported people and equipment to the scene. Yet he broke with the FBI in an affidavit filed for the defense. His actions seemed to stem from a closeness that developed with the people he helped set up and the government's failure to honor commitments made to him. He claims his involvement with the group ". . . was the best possible effort I have ever experienced; it was a community of people bound together by love and dedication. I will never forget them." He reports being promised by the FBI that they would intervene before the action could be carried out and that those involved would not go to jail. Neither of these promises was honored.

The case of Frank Martinez shows some parallels. Martinez worked as an informer for the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms enforcement division of the Treasury Department. He was an organizer for the Brown Berets and took provocative actions resulting in a police raid and arrests at the Chicano Moratorium Committee office in Los Angeles. However, he eventually cut off relations with authorities, claiming that they broke an agreement not to prosecute him for illegal actions committed "in the line of duty" and that they did not accept his reports about the legal self-help nature of a Chicano organization that authorities told him they wanted to close down "by any means necessary." He was also disturbed by what he saw as the framing of three innocent men on a drug selling charge in the "Los Tres del Barrio" case. Martinez also claimed that authorities thought the three had engaged in a series of Los Angeles bombings, but as a result of his investigations he became convinced that they were not actually responsible. When asked why he had chosen to publicize his activities Martinez replied, ". . . people were being railroaded . . . I was being sold out. I had good intentions of working for the government. I believed in it. When I began to see how corrupt the government was in destroying my people, I couldn't see it anymore."

More prosaic sources of motivation such as the desire for money and attention may mix with guilt, or the discovery that the government's view of a group is false. Thus Louis Tackwood, an agent with 10 years' experience as an informer in criminal and political cases voluntarily surfaced in Los Angeles. Tackwood, who wrote a book about his activities and hoped to sell the movie rights, reports being inspired by Daniel Ellsberg. He states, " after the Angela [Davis] set up... I couldn't take it any more. She was a good sister. So I decided to try and help you people after all the things I've done against the 'movement.' Kind of like paying you back."

To be credible, the agent must share at least some of the class, age, ethnic, racial, religious or sexual attributes of the group he or she is informing on. This is especially true when the movement is structured around issues related to these sources of identity. However this very fact opens the agent to a susceptibility to sympathize with the anger and goals of the group.

Familiarity can breed affection as well as contempt, particularly to the extent that the agent is cut off from familiar surroundings and friends and becomes immersed in a new life. The agent may experience severe cross-pressures and feelings of guilt. The more agents become trusted members, the greater may be their concern about the betrayal and deception involved in their actions.

A bulletin to FBI agents about the recruitment of informants among activists already in a movement suggests that some "will be overcome by the overwhelming personalities of the contacting [FBI] agent and volunteer to tell on a continuing basis." Yet the reverse is equally true. Some informants planted in movements will become so overwhelmed by the personalities of activists and their strength, vision, ideology or suffering that they will "tell all," to the movement and perhaps even serve as double agents.

Nevertheless one must treat the surfacing and/or conversion of agents with more than a usual amount of skepticism. Their appearance may sometimes be a conscious strategy by authorities to create fear, suspicion and paranoia among activists. Or conversely, what appears to be a conversion, may simply be the surfacing of a double agent sympathetic to activists from the start. Thus an "informant" in one of the Panther cases, whose information to police was used to get wiretap authorization, later testified for the defense. In his role as "police informer" he was actually a Panther infiltrating the police to see what they knew and were planning to do. When a group, set on a certain line of action, discovers it is subject to surveillance it may attempt to plant someone in the authorities' camp who will then infiltrate their group, and permit the establishment of an entrapment defense.

In other instances as with William Lemmer, a Vietnam Veterans Against the War activist, public confessions involve the working out of inner needs more than clear ideological shifts or conversions. Lemmer tried to serve both the VVAW and the FBI at the same time. He came to share many of the views of his victims and to identify with them; at the same time he felt he needed the FBI to protect him from enemies he perceived in military intelligence and elsewhere. It is difficult to tell who's side such an agent is on, or what he really thinks.

The motivation of some people who surface as double agents is no doubt exquisitely complex, varying from one situation to another and from stage to stage in their career. An unstable personality or changing pressures may mean shifts in allegiance back and forth.

Yet the fact that some agents are legitimately "turned" is far from the only problem in their use. Perhaps more common than the tendency for agents to

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become converted and lose their governmental zeal is the opposite: the tendency for agents to become overly zealous and to create the problems they set out to control. The secrecy under which they operate, their efforts to establish credibility by doing "heavy" things, the belief that their tie with authorities gives them immunity to engage in crimes, and an incentive system that may reward them in proportion to how dangerous the group they are involved with is—all of these contribute to informant excesses.

Because there is little or no public accountability or information available with respect to the use of informants, it is impossible to know how representative are the actions of people such as "Tommy the traveler" who incited students to violence on a number of campuses in upstate New York or Boyd Douglas in the Berrigan case.

Whatever aspect of the issue one sees as most troubling, it is clear that the use of informants is an unpleasant and dangerous business, full of risk, uncertainty, immorality and frequently illegality.

Yet in some contexts there seems to be no alternative for gaining information. Or the alternatives are still more unpalatable—electronic surveillance, search and seizure without a warrant, and physical or psychological coercion to gain information. The increased use of informants in American life may in part be a response to progress made in limiting other means of gaining information traditionally available to authorities. The use of informants becomes a functional alternative.

Those desiring to see less violence and greater civility in American life must ponder the implications of the fact that following what appears to be FBI involvement in a Klan bombing incident in Meridian, Mississippi, a wave of Klan terror involving the bombing of churches and synagogues ended. The killing of three civil rights workers in the summer of 1964, of Viola Liuzzo after the Selma-Montgomery march, of Col. Lemuel Penn in Georgia, and of postman Vernon Dahmer in his walk for freedom in Mississippi, could not have been solved without the help of informers. Undercover activities have been an important factor in the decline of the Klan following both its post-World War II and 1960s resurgence. A plot against the life of Cesar Chavez was reportedly stopped through the action of a paid informant. The Knapp Commission inquiry into New York police corruption would not have been possible without the cooperation of agents.

It is naive to think that exposing informant excesses, or their involvement in horrendous events will lead to a major reduction in their use. The practice is hard to limit (whether in industry, sports or politics) because it grows so naturally out of human interaction. Our desire to have some control over events, as implied in a high police official's rhetorical question, "do you want us to wait until after the President is assassinated?" is also a factor.

So are broad social changes. Until recently the relative openness of American society, historic Anglo-Saxon traditions of civil liberty, and inefficient, decentralized law enforcement have limited some of the abusive police practices characteristic of societies such as France and Russia. However, is the increased use of informants merely one indication of a move toward more centralized policing of politics or does it represent hasty, amateur actions in the face of an exaggerated threat? The evidence points toward the former. The increased centralization of American life, the expansion of federal and state law enforcement bureaucracies (the FBI, with less than 100 agents at the start of World War I, now has 25,000 employees), "professionalization," regional police efforts, intelligence pooling and the phenomenal growth of private investigative and policing organizations attest to this. New technology—electronic surveillance, rapid communication and data processing which are making possible the federal crime data bank are also conducive to it. Nixon-Mitchell policies that resulted in vast increases in the amount of money available for law enforcement have encouraged the use of informants and increased the likelihood of entrapment. The proportion of US arrests involving informants or official involvement in the offence undertaken to gain evidence (as in prostitution and narcotics cases) has increased markedly in recent years.

There is considerable public support for the use of informants. James Bond and the G-man are culture heroes. Only 14 percent of a national *Newsweek* sample felt that the FBI has "gone too far" in "having agents or informers pose as members of militant protest groups," while 29 percent felt they had "not done enough." Twenty-four percent answered "don't know" and 33 percent "about right."

Discussion of the use of political informants is difficult because all we know comes from an occasional case that becomes public as a result of the conversion of an agent or a trial. Are the obvious violations of legal and ethical standards usually revealed by such cases typical? The congressional investigating committees now looking at domestic intelligence may provide answers to questions such as: How widespread is the infiltration of agents into political movements and the recruitment of persons already in a movement for purposes of intelligence? What is the legal justification for such actions? Does their use in a "preventive" or "insurance policy" fashion violate the First, Second and Fourth Amendments? Shouldn't strictures as in wiretapping and search and seizure be applied to the infiltration of agents? What determines when the practice is to be used? How many informants are there and what agencies do they work for? What are the main types of agents? How are they recruited? How much are political informants paid? In what other ways are they "rewarded"? What are the consequences of a reward system operated in a context of secrecy for a product

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whose worth it is difficult to evaluate? How is the "effectiveness" of an informant and the overall program evaluated? What external review and checks and balances are built into the system? What kinds of inter-agency relations and policies exist about the sharing of agents? Under what conditions are abuses most likely to occur? What new legislation, policies and procedures are needed to reduce abuses? What are the implications of the fact that in spite of elaborate bureaucratic procedures, abuses are common?

Under some very limited conditions the use of informants may be acceptable and necessary. However as one moves from commonly recognized offenses to activities of a political nature, and from situations where a serious crime has actually been committed to those where a group or individual is merely suspect, using informers seems to increase criminality and destroy civil liberties. It is well to keep in mind the warning of a Federal prosecutor, "informants are like using a wonder drug. You had better be sure the disease you're trying to cure is lethal, because the side effects sure can be."

Knocking Heads Against Earl Butz

Stymied Farm Democrats

by Joel Solkoff

"I remember a few hangings," Sen. Hubert Humphrey (D, Minn.) said. Humphrey, who is chairman of the Joint Economic Committee of Congress, had spent the morning trying to contain his frustration. The hearing, held in April, was the first of two "designed to review the entire range of agricultural questions." Sen. William Proxmire (D, Wis.) had stopped by to complain that the Department of Agriculture (USDA) was dumping cheese on the market, driving dairy farmers out of business. "Last year we lost 10 farmers a day in our state," he said. Finally, after hearing nearly three hours of testimony from agricultural economists and representatives of farm organizations, Humphrey let go:

"I remember the depression days when the people that really led the farmers' revolt were not some farmers that had themselves 10 acres . . . and never made a dime, but the leading farm organizer in my part of the country was a fellow by the name of Hanson, who was a pillar in the Lutheran Church, and who was one of the most prosperous farmers that we had in there in the 1920s. He was out there leading the parade right down to Campbell Park in 1934. I remember the farmers going down the street with pitchforks and rakes in their hands." Then Humphrey talked about the hangings. "They were Federal judges. I hope that doesn't happen again."

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The clear implication was that Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz, scheduled to lead off the next round of testimony, was already being fitted for the noose. Humphrey's burst of anger filled the air with excitement. One could imagine how the young Democratic-farmer-labor mayor of Minneapolis had ignited the 1948 Democratic National Convention with the fire of his progressive views. It was only after Chairman Humphrey had banged the gavel and said, "We have to go" that it became apparent that the room was empty. There were no other reporters present, and including the transcriber and the senator, there were fewer than 10 people to listen to the remarks.

The mythology of populism still has a firm hold on the language of congressional Democrats. "A lot of people pay lip service to it, and I think a lot of people really believe it, and I don't think they're wrong," Sen. Dick Clark (D, Iowa) said about the need to invoke the spirit of small farmers—with pitchforks in their hands—in discussions about agricultural policy. The Populist movement sprang up at the end of the 19th century when the frontier was driven out of existence by the railroads and the railroads' need to settle the land alongside the roadbed. In 1878 the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad advertised cheap and free land in southern Iowa and southeastern Nebraska. Quoting one observer, "I have never, before coming here, taken much stock in the stories of wonderfully cheap homes in the West, but I find people here . . . living almost in affluence on their prairie farms, who I know left New

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York State only a few years ago with next to nothing." Within 10 years it would no longer be possible for the failed and the oppressed to find wealth by moving to undeveloped land and working hard. Farmers found themselves at the mercy of trusts—like the railroads and the large banks—huge, anonymous and remote with the power to tell them how much they would receive for their crops and whether they would be loaned enough to buy seeds or pay their taxes. No longer able to escape oppression by moving West, the farmers had to stay and fight, and throughout rural America, farmers were demanding relief from low prices, tight money and large corporations.

The Populists, formed officially as a third party in 1891, gave expression to an agrarian movement that Democratic politicians to this day find necessary to echo. Humphrey's father was converted from Republicanism when he heard a speech by William Jennings Bryan, the silver-tongued crusader for easy money. Franklin Roosevelt handed over the implementation of farm policy to the progressives who had their roots in the Populist revolt, and it is that policy—the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933—which Democrats in Congress refer to today when they talk about "the farm program." It established the machinery for stabilizing prices through controlling supply, ensuring that farmers received a living wage and consumers were charged a reasonable price. The '33 Act was an emergency measure, designed to deal with the fact that people don't eat in the long run, "They eat every day." Even though the Supreme Court declared the act unconstitutional, in 1938 Congress could think of no other way of dealing with the farm problem, so it simply passed again what was essentially the old law. It is that law which established the principle that the people of the United States and not large private corporations should determine agricultural policy, and it is both that law and that principle which Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz has been working so arduously and effectively to destroy.

Because our farm program is an emergency measure created 42 years ago and left virtually unchanged (except for slight modifications in wording), it contains many anachronistic features subject to easy attack. In the interim, the ability of members of Congress to understand agricultural issues has diminished dramatically. Constituent pressures determine the skills legislators spend their time developing. From 1940 to mid-1960 there was a massive migration. Over a million farmers left their homes for cities each year. In 1930 nearly 25 percent of the American people lived on farms. Today the figure is 4.4 percent. There are nearly twice as many unemployed people as there are farmers, and when the results of this year's farm census come in, Calvin Beale, USDA's leader of Population Studies, estimates that there will be fewer men, women and children living on all the farms in the United States than live in New York City. Only one member in three of the House is from a rural area and many districts labeled as "rural" include significant concentrations of urban voters.

"Why do people think of Wisconsin as a farm state?" Sen. Proxmire asked me. "Only eight percent of our people are farmers. Wisconsin's not a farm state the way Iowa . . . is." Actually Iowa is not a "farm state" either. Iowa's main source of income is manufacturing. Fifty-seven percent of Iowa's population is urban (the figure was five percent in 1850) and Sen. Clark estimates that "only 16 percent are legitimate farmers." Clark, who taught Slavic history at an Iowa college before entering politics, said, "The farm economy is different than most. You get one crop a year. The only way you possibly can get the public as a whole to understand farm problems is through education. It may be an impossible job."

Meanwhile rural America, which has been deserted, is decaying. In 1973 a Senate Agriculture Committee report entitled *The Immovable Feast* contained the prediction that unless something is done to stop the abandonment of tens of thousands of railroad lines and to improve rural roads—highway construction has concentrated on roads between cities, while roads between farms have deteriorated badly—"we will be importing food cheaper than we can raise and transport it to our cities." When one considers that agricultural exports are America's number one source of foreign exchange, the consequences are unthinkable. The report continues, "If this happens (and it very well might in the next 10 years if something isn't done immediately) then we could have the worst depression this country has ever experienced."

As farmers find themselves more and more isolated in the countryside, miles away from decent health care, from other job opportunities, surrounded by abandoned country stores and post offices, the Department of Agriculture has been preaching the virtues of the free-market system and requiring that they compete in that system. "We don't require that General Motors or US Steel compete in a free market system," Proxmire said. "The farmer works in an atmosphere of unfair competition." He points out that farmers buy their goods—fertilizer, petroleum, tractors, food and other consumer items—in a market dominated by large corporations that determine the price they receive. Meanwhile "millions of farmers produce identical products," and the price they receive is determined on the "free market" by the purchases of an increasingly small number of large corporations. "If you really want competition," Proxmire says, "one way to do it is to break up General Motors and US Steel. People make speeches about it, but it just isn't going to happen."

There is general agreement that the small family farm is a thing of the past. In 1973 nearly half of the cash sales of agricultural products were earned by fewer than four percent of America's farms. Calvin

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Beale says that it's difficult to say how small a farm can be to survive because of the variance in crops. "A wheat farmer in Montana with 300 acres will go broke while a farmer growing 300 acres of peanuts, cotton or tobacco in the South will do all right. Generally we figure that a farmer selling $20,000 worth of corn or wheat can make enough to live, but with poultry or milk he has to sell much more because there is small profit margins and you have to sell in high volume." Recently the head of the USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service estimated that a new farmer hoping to receive an income of $15,000 a year farming in the wheat belt had to invest in land worth a million dollars (and that does not include production and equipment costs).

Sen. Clark outlined the problems of farmers in Iowa, where the average farm is 251 acres, and a farm of that size, with a quarter of a million dollars in capital equipment, is considered marginally able to survive. Smaller farmers will be forced to go out of business, and since people who still try to eke out a full-time living on them are older people for whom there appear to be no other opportunities, "we ought to do everything we possibly can to slow down the process." However even the average family farmer "who is a large businessman" faces some rather gloomy prospects.

There is the fear of corporate farming. The cattlemen, for example, are afraid because the people who own feedlots are buying land. The meat industry threatens to drive farmers with 6000 acre holdings out of business, taking over all the elements of production in a process called vertical integration. While helping to direct Ralston Purina's takeover of the broiler industry, Earl Butz, who was also dean of Purdue University's agricultural college, wrote an article entitled "Don't Be Afraid of Integration." As Secretary of Agriculture, Butz blames the high cost of food on middlemen, the packagers and processors, for such curious facts that food prices last year rose 11 percent while farm prices dropped seven percent. In the process of vertical integration, corporations like Ralston Purina are not only the middlemen who clean and package the chickens, but they own the land the chickens were raised on and they own the land that grew the Ralston Purina processed feed that fed the Ralston Purina owned and processed chickens. Large family farms are being driven out of business by large corporations that blur the distinction between income derived from farming and income derived from processing. The alarming takeover of farming by huge conglomerates—we now buy orange juice from Coca Cola, lettuce from Dow Chemical, Wonder Bread from ITT—has reached the point that vertical integration accounts for 40 percent of the potatoes we eat, 75 percent of processed vegetables, 95 percent of broilers, 70 percent of citrus products and 33 percent of fresh vegetables. Allan Burke, spokesman for the Midwest Caucus of Democratic Senators, an informal organization of 19 chaired by Sen. Jim Abourezk (D, SD) that works on rural development issues, pointed out that the livestock industry is in serious trouble because operators are suffering "a credit problem. Interest rates are high and there is a shortage of money."

Butz, a former research fellow at the Brookings Institution, has achieved considerable political success by provoking the liberal urban-based press into picturing him as a country bumpkin and bigot. He has been effectively dismantling the Department of Agriculture while relying on the unlikely coalition of congressional "free enterprise" conservatives and "consumer-oriented" liberals to vote to kill existing programs. Many of the liberals call Butz nasty names while voting as Butz suggests. Burke points out that the Secretary of Agriculture has been an extremely effective lobbyist, frequently "putting out figures that are not true."

Congress does not know how to deal with an administrator who simply refuses to execute the law. Sen. George McGovern (D, SD) said, "It is not up to the Secretary of Agriculture to decide which program to carry out and which to ignore. His job is to administer the law. And I suggested to him earlier this year that if he doesn't like the law, then the proper answer is for him to resign, and perhaps run for Congress, so he can change the law." Since Butz is unwilling to resign simply because McGovern asks him to, I asked the senator how he intends to force Butz "to administer the law." McGovern said, in effect, that he does not know.

Meanwhile Butz has been working to get his own men elected to Congress. On July 22 William Erwin resigned as Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Rural Development to run for Congress after Butz contacted at least seven officials in the Republican party organization of Indiana's second congressional district. The seat is currently being held by Floyd J. Fithian, a liberal Democrat, and since the district includes Purdue University, Butz's home turf, Fithian's presence there is a source of discomfort to the Secretary. According to one observer, Erwin was effective as director of Rural Development, "if by that you mean that the profile of rural development in the department was so low you could trip over it."

In April when the Secretary of Agriculture did appear before Humphrey's Joint Economic Committee, he said that he would have to make his testimony short because he had an appointment at the White House. The appointment was to advise President Ford to veto the emergency one-year agriculture bill. The bill (an amendment to the Agricultural Adjustment Act) was anathema to Butz because it would have required the Secretary to raise price supports for farmers, ensuring them a decent income, allowing them access to loan money, and protecting dairy farmers from being driven out of business. Humphrey jokingly suggested locking Butz in the room so that he would fail to meet the

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appointment.

Most farm Democrats view the failure to override the President's veto with despair. Sen. Proxmire, for example, said that he could think of no remedy to farmers' problems as long as there is a Republican administration. In the interim, men like Sen. Clark are working to break the control of the large grain companies. A few weeks ago the Senate Agriculture Committee passed a Clark amendment that would require the 12 companies that each export over four percent of the nation's grain to reveal who owns the companies and where they do their business. Clark also was successful in passing an amendment to allow the General Accounting Office, Congress' investigative branch, to look at grain company books. The companies not only export grain and own the ships on which it is exported but own local grain elevators that buy the farmers' grain, own railroad spurs and boxcars. (There is currently an investigation into allegations that some companies have so monopolized the availability of boxcars that farmers are forced to sell at the requested price or watch their unsold grain rot for lack of transportation and storage money.) Clark pointed out that frequently farmers do not know whom they are selling to because many of the privately owned companies don't have to disclose such information.

When Sen. Henry Bellmon (R, Okla.) pointed out that a section of a bill Humphrey was proposing to clean up the inspection of grain was redundant because the Secretary of Agriculture already has the authority, Humphrey said that he didn't care because the Secretary is not using the authority and he wanted to require that he do so. Humphrey had introduced a bill, saying that it must be enforced with "no if's, and, or Butz—get it?" However, unless Humphrey and his colleagues can figure out some way to override presidential vetoes, the current willingness of the Department of Agriculture to hand over the production of food to the private sector means that a small number of large, anonymous corporations will tell American consumers what they can eat, in what amounts, and at what price.

Europe, for Once, United

Lisbon and Brussels

by Daniel Yergin

Luxembourg

The very fact that it was Maj. Melo Antunes who came as Portuguese foreign minister to Luxembourg a few days ago to discuss aid with the foreign ministers from the nine countries of the European Community points to the at-least temporary victory for moderation in Lisbon. For Antunes, author of the manifesto of the April 1974 revolution, led the elements within the Armed Forces Movement that successfully opposed the Communist-dominated government of Vasco Gonçalves. But his presence—and the approval of emergency aid—must also be seen as a victory of the European Community itself, in its most significant foreign policy venture to date.

Without doubt, the single most important external influence on developments within Portugal has been the stance of the European Community. The nine members succeeded, after a time, in forging a common foreign policy to meet a critical situation, and they did so in partial opposition to the United States. "For once," as a Common Market official put it, "we weren't a junior partner, but a senior partner."

The European Community's movement into international politics results from two factors: the addition of Britain, which now means that the community is synonymous with the main power centers of Western Europe, and the willingness of the nine members to work in concert in order to achieve a larger effect than individual foreign policies ever could. Their first venture into common foreign policy occurred in Helsinki and Geneva, where the nine nations worked out among themselves the basic Western positions at the European Security Conference. But Portugal presented a more difficult challenge, not merely to the European Community, but to the entire West.

The possibility of a totalitarian Communist state in Portugal presented, first of all, a security problem to the Western alliance. But, at least insofar as is now

Daniel Yergin's book, *The Rise of the National Security State*, will be published by Houghton Mifflin next year.

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known, the Western countries were not able to respond at that level. The Vietnam debacle, Watergate and the CIA's present miseries all ruled out direct US intervention, no matter what some senior officials might have wished. Indeed, in August, President Ford, in one of his less brilliant declarations, actually announced that it was "very tragic" that "because of the CIA investigations and all the limitations placed on us in the area of covert operations," the United States could not intervene in the manner to which it had become accustomed. Nor, the fantasies of the far left or far right notwithstanding, could NATO do much—even if its leaders had wanted to. No Brezhnev doctrine could be conjured up for the Western half of Europe. Avenues for indirect influence were few. The Portuguese delegation to NATO in Brussels is small, and neither it nor Portuguese forces have played any large role in the organization. Portuguese officers and troops had been otherwise engaged for years, fighting colonial wars in Africa, and had relatively few personal links to the other services that belong to NATO.

In fact, there was precious little NATO could do except to watch and worry. "For months we were biting our own fingernails—and each other's," said one senior NATO official. Senior Americans in NATO, as if preparing themselves for the worst, started to downplay in their own minds the strategic significance of the situation. As this same official explained: "It would not matter if we did not have Portugal—what would matter if it were taken over by the other side." The key strategic site has remained the air facilities on the Azores, but NATO officials were confident that, if mainland Portugal went too far left, the conservative island community would secede. Beyond such ruminations, about all NATO could do—which it did do—was progressively limit the Portuguese access to military secrets.

There was one final sanction, of a negative kind—expulsion. Last spring the United States, and in particular Secretary Kissinger, concluded that Portugal was "lost" and was gearing up to win assent of the other NATO members to expulsion. But it is now known that on at least two occasions—the second in early June, just following the NATO summit—West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, after spending hours with personal representatives who had just returned from Portugal, telephoned other Western leaders to say that the Americans were wrong, that Portugal was not "lost" but that expulsion could help lose it. As one official close to Schmidt said: "The United States relied on different sources from us, they used conservative industrialists and right wing officers and others who could not know what was going on in the Armed Forces Movement." Expulsion of Portugal, in fact, would have undermined the more moderate officers and pushed Portugal further on its leftward march. What the Americans had interpreted as the beginning of the end—the seizure of the Socialist newspaper *Republica* by the extreme left—was actually the turning point, the moment at which the Socialists determined to carry the struggle to public opinion.

But a much better chance for influencing the outcome than through NATO lay with the other multinational organization headquartered in Brussels, the European Economic Community. Its only real power is economic, but it can wield this in a highly political manner. What it had to offer Portugal was both a long-term relationship with the major economic force in Europe and short-term economic assistance. Economic diplomacy is always a difficult matter. Do you make your offer and hope you get the results you want, or do you make your offer contingent on certain preconditions being met—with the possibility that you can wait a very long time? The Community finally chose the latter path.

So much attention has been focused since the beginning of the year on the ideological debates and political maneuvering within Portugal that Portugal's fundamental need for Europe has often been lost sight of. But it cannot be ignored any more. Almost 20 percent of the Portuguese labor force works not in Portugal but in the nine countries of the EEC, and "the nine" is its major trading partner. Meanwhile, in the last year, economic life inside Portugal has rapidly deteriorated. Inflation is around 30 percent, unemployment is approaching 20 percent. Capital and skilled professionals have been fleeing, while some 300,000 refugees from the former African colonies have flooded into the country. Much economic activity in the country has simply stopped, and many Portuguese workers in Europe have ceased sending back their remittance. Tourism, the second largest earner of foreign currency, has dropped from $269 million in 1973 to probably less than a hundred million dollars in 1975, and Portugal has now exhausted its foreign reserves. This economic situation has for many months underpinned the ideological debates.

Clearly the economy cannot continue in this state. As complete collapse drew closer, it became clear that there were not too many options. The Soviet Union had certainly been willing to subsidize the Portuguese Communist party with many millions of dollars. They very conveniently were able to use a bank workers' union as one of their many conduits, until a change of leadership in that union almost caught them with telexes and documents undestroyed. Aeroflot flights suddenly became a frequent feature at Lisbon's airport, and Lisbon became a new stop on the run to Havana. For many months Aeroflot passengers did not have to pass through the same control procedures as those from other international airlines. But it is one thing to help out your comrades—it is the least you can do for the revolution—and quite another thing to take on the subsidization of the entire economy. A Communist Portugal would work against other more important

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Soviet interests in Europe and, among other consequences, would no doubt revivify NATO. Many in the Soviet leadership would hesitate before taking on another permanent bailing-out operation like that in Cuba, and the recent experience with Egypt would suggest some caution in getting too involved with a new batch of unreliable, left wing army officers. Many on the left in Portugal, including military men who had served in Africa, now see themselves as part of the Third World. But while ideologically interesting, such attitudes do not provide much help in addressing immediate problems. The United States was standing aside. That left the European Community, which could muster the massive short-term aid that is needed and, in the longer term, offer some form of economic integration—a possibility of magnetic attraction for all the peripheral countries of Europe. Some trading links had been established in 1972 as part of the cushion provided to other members of the European Free Trade Association when Britain departed EFTA for the EEC.

Talks about assistance began almost immediately after the 1974 coup, but so much else was happening in Portugal and its colonies—and the Community itself was slow to respond—that the issue did not come to the top of the agenda until the autumn of 1974. By then, however, the disturbing signs of Communist ascendancy were already becoming obvious. In February 1975, Sir Christopher Soames, vice president of the Commission, the Community's executive responsible for "external affairs," went to Lisbon to discuss assistance. Much to his surprise, Premier Vasco Gonçalves denounced EEC links and interest as neo-colonialism. Clearly certain elements in Portugal were not looking towards Brussels. "Some of the officers had spent their time in Mozambique and Angola reading Marx and Lenin, and trying to understand the revolutionary outlook of their opponents, and not in studying European economics, and where their migrant workers were, and who they traded with," observed one Community official recently. Others in Lisbon, however, such as Socialist leader Mario Soares and Maj. Melo Antunes, just as clearly were most interested in the Brussels connection.

For several crucial months, the Community was unable to make up its mind as to whether to offer aid or not. That lack of commitment helped the extreme left within Portugal. Within the Commission, Soames was reluctant to move ahead on aid until after the situation had cleared.

More important, however, was opposition from some of the national capitals. The Commission primarily concerns itself with those "external relations" having to do with Community trade policies. The shaping of larger policies in international affairs is reserved for what is called the "political cooperation effort," in effect a council of the national states. As early as 1970, Community members had recognized that, with British membership, the EEC would take on a new political importance, and political cooperation was devised as the method. This involves regular meetings of the heads of states and foreign ministers—and even more regular meetings of the specialists from the nine foreign offices. The chief political officers of those services meet once a month, or even more frequently. Political cooperation—that is, the enunciation of a Community position—does not depend upon treaty, but rather works on consensus. Any one country can veto a move, but all the countries share an interest in creating a Community voice. For instance, while the French were not very interested in the human rights issues in Basket 3 of the European Security Conference, they agreed to go along with the majority.

But when it came to Portugal, the French were not willing to go along. France blocked assistance for reasons of its own domestic politics. President Giscard d'Estaing did not want the Community giving aid that bolstered a coalition in which Communists and Socialists served side by side, for fear that a success in Portugal would make such an alternative to his regime more attractive in future French elections. Indeed, he rather appreciated the chaos in Portugal, with its suggestion that the left could not govern. The Italian government, faced with a similar domestic situation, supported the French. Germany, Holland, Denmark and Belgium wanted to give aid as quickly as possible. Great Britain, despite its Labour government, has lined up more with the French. "We don't understand the British," complained one German Social Democrat. "The only reason we can see is that the British think they are poor enough and do not want the EEC to give help to Portugal that they might get for themselves." The German Social Democrats were the strongest group in favor of direct aid. Indeed, Bonn was the only government that by this past summer had actually earmarked funds from its own budget (30 million dollars) for Portugal. The Social Democrats have close links to the Portuguese Socialists.

The German Social Democrats heatedly deny, however, *The New York Times'* story in late September which citing "four official sources," implied that the German Social Democrats were channeling CIA money to the Socialists in Portugal. "This is an attempt to discredit Soares," said one senior Social Democrat. "But from which side does it come? From the Communists—or from the right wing Spinola side, which wants to discredit the last attempt to establish a democratic government in Portugal in the mistaken hope that a counter coup might work? The entire story is ridiculous. There is no longer any confidence in Europe in the secrecy of CIA operations. No responsible politician—even if he wanted to, and we certainly do not want to—could accept money from the CIA, for too many things have been revealed, and are being revealed. It would be suicide."

On the contrary, the German Social Democrats

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concentrated on trying to get the European Community to provide assistance. Because the SDP is the senior member of the Bonn coalition, and because Germany is the richest member of the Community, their attitude carries considerable weight. But political cooperation required unanimity before the Community could act, and Giscard kept his veto in.

A crisis in Portugal resolved the debate within the European Community. In the middle of July, taking a very big gamble, Soares and the Socialists left the increasingly Communist-dominated coalition. A few days later, the other major non-Communist party, the Popular Democrats, followed suit. This occurred just as the Community's foreign ministers and heads of state were assembling for a regular political cooperation meeting. And they quickly agreed that the Community did not want to aid a Communist government in Portugal.

But the Europeans still did more than leave the door open. Portugal could still choose to align its fate with Western Europe—as was clear from the formula with which the heads of state announced postponement of their aid decision—" That the European Community—in accordance with its European policy—can only support a pluralist democracy." They let it be known as well that progress toward pluralism would be received with a very generous understanding—about 700 million dollars over three years. In other words the Community was pledging itself to help any government that reelected, on one hand, the Socialist and Popular Democrat victory in last April's election and, on the other, elements in the military represented by Antunes and his colleagues. The significance was obvious to the Lisbon leadership, and became widely known among the Portuguese public. In the face of economic collapse, more moderate officers found that the Community's position made a powerful case for changing course in Portugal in discussions with their brother officers. Those interested in economic reconstruction had to look towards Brussels.

At the same time, European leaders expressed their concern in other ways. Willy Brandt, chairman of the German Social Democratic party and one of the strongest voices in Europe arguing for immediate aid, became leader of a European-wide Socialist group that focused attention on Portugal. At the Helsinki European Security Conference, Western leaders reminded the Soviets that too-active involvement in Portugal could jeopardize some of their more important interests elsewhere. When, on the way to the signing ceremony, British Prime Minister Wilson mentioned the Western concern to General Secretary Brezhnev, the Soviet leader replied that he would definitely have to "think" on this matter.

Weeks of turmoil followed in Portugal, with demonstrations and counter-demonstrations, as the major political groupings vied to establish the strength of their support among the public. Several times, apparently, Soares was close to arrest by the Gonçalves government. At last, in mid-September, Adm. Azevedo succeeded in forming a new government—the sixth since the revolution—based upon a "silent coalition" between Antunes, once again foreign minister, and Soares, who has stayed out of the government. Azevedo's program emphasized the link to the European Community, and the admiral has committed himself to the Community's formulation—progress toward "democratic pluralism."

Maj. Antunes' arrival in Luxembourg shows how urgent the new government considers the need for assistance. Now the question becomes how quickly can the slow-moving Community act. The July offer has already been scaled down to about $180 million in emergency loans from the European Investment Bank, to be guaranteed by the nine countries. There is still the promise of more longer-range assistance. The Community can also provide indirect aid of many kinds—for instance, France (from Algeria) and Germany (from the end of World War II and with many millions who have fled from the East) have considerable experience in integrating refugees into society that can be of use to Portugal. But it is of the utmost importance that the Community this time delivers—and swiftly—on its promise if Portugal is to be spared further chaos and if basic confidence is to be restored. For, as the continuing turmoil demonstrates, the Azevedo government offers a chance, but not a foregone conclusion. Coups from the right or the left are still possible, and the Portuguese Communist party is hardly likely to give up its own long struggle. And the government faces a dangerous test in its efforts to reassert discipline over key sectors of the military. How stable can the situation be when, as happened a few days ago, the head of the COPCON security force (Gen. de Carvalho) could actually declare: "If I had had a better political education, I might have been the Fidel Castro of Europe."

Portugal has given an opportunity—or forced—the European Community to find a common foreign policy. Whether it will be able to continue to do so in the future is still open to question, although the trend established by the European Security Conference and now Portugal does point in that direction. These developments suggest that the Europeans themselves, as much if not more than the Americans, may assume responsibility for the problems presented by those 'days' that are drawing nearer—the day when Franco goes, and the day when the Italian Communists come into the Italian Coalition. It is no sure thing, of course, that the Europeans will agree among themselves, for both questions will involve many conflicting interests. Portugal has been an encouraging first step, and perhaps one European Community official was not being too optimistic when he explained: "We see Portugal as an internal European matter."

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Arts and Lives

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Women at Work

Swept Away by an Unusual Destiny in the Blue Sea of August (Cinema V). This is the full title of the new film by Lina Wertmüller—known as *Swept Away*—whose two previous films had equally long titles but were known as *Love and Anarchy* and *The Seduction of Mimi*. Those titles might seem mere pretentious attempts to aggrandize minor talent, as with some new German directors; but Wertmüller, despite her name, is Italian, not German, and despite her pretentious titles is exceptionally talented. *Love and Anarchy* was an unrealized comedy about a would-be assassin of Mussolini, hiding in a Roman brothel; *Mimi* was a realized comedy about sex in Sicily. Wertmüller's new film is again written by herself, again concentrates on tensions in sex and the social order, and again uses her two favorite actors, Mariangela Melato and Giancarlo Giannini. By now Wertmüller has done enough to show character, style and growth.

Swept Away is not her best film (*Mimi* is, I think) but it's her best-made, almost free of her previous quasi-hysterical camera use, frenetic with zoom shots and odd angles, except near the end where the script becomes tenuous and the camera itself seems discomfited by it. For the most and excellent part one can simply sit back and enjoy *looking* at this picture. The color photography by Giulio Battiferri, Giuseppe Fornari and Stefano Ricciotti makes it seem as if the camera had been invented for Italians. The editing is witty and sharp and propulsive. Sheerly cinematically, the picture is pretty much a treat.

The trouble is the script. It starts on a yacht cruising in the (I guess) Tyrrhenian Sea. The yacht belongs to Melato and her husband who are hosts to a small party. Giannini is one of the crew and a particular butt of her insolent, *Harper's Bazaar* hauteur. Arguments between Melato and a leftist guest give her plenty of chance to display her conservative politics and her special dislike of this one meridional member of the crew. Below decks he growls at her.

We know that some sort of upset is coming, otherwise there would be no film. When Giannini takes Melato in a rubber dinghy to a grotto where she wants to swim and the motor conks out, the course of the plot becomes clear. They are going to be forced to spend time together and will change their minds about each other; there will surely be sex, possibly love. The very symmetry of the set-up and reversal is itself pleasant. The pair are cast ashore on a small deserted island and remain there for what must be some weeks. He knows how to feed and warm himself; she is helpless. Her dependency on him cracks her arrogance, and his competence makes her fall in love with him. At last, when she is, in more than one sense, sufficiently supine, he sleeps with her. And likes it. Master and maid, they fall in love.

Finally and rather reluctantly, they are rescued. She, still in love, goes off sadly with her rich husband. He, still in love, goes off angrily with his plump wife.

Melato is like a sexy snake, darting, voluptuous, coiling. The contrast between rich-bitch and doormat is easy enough in profile for any actress to score points in, but Melato animates the two of her with a talent that colors the very origins of her voice, the rhythms of her movement. Giannini is nothing like so accomplished an actor. As he has shown in the past, he works mostly in cartoon—broad outlines, popping eyes, guttural explosions. Still he has the virtues of cartoon: vivid line and immediately effective energy.

But why did Wertmüller make this film? At the start I thought it was going to be a kind of parody of *L'Avventura*, with the sequences on the yacht, the move to the island, even a small abandoned shepherd's house as in Antonioni. (Another parody: the hot embrace in the cool surf, like Deborah Kerr and Burt Lancaster in *From Here to Eternity.)* The parody evaporated. Then came knockdown fights between the pair, their equivalent of courtship, as rough and funny as any physical sex combat I've seen on film. Then came the shift of dominance, a shift—whichever way it goes—that is always good for comedy and romance.

But what is it all for? Wertmüller makes pictures too intelligently to escape that question. The very texture of what she does convinces us that she is doing it for more than the texture, but she doesn't make the purpose clear. Is she really trying to say that women basically want cave-man treatment, and that civilization is keeping them from basic gratification? (Odd that another Italian woman director, Liliana Cavani, dwelt on a woman's love of being dominated in her vastly inferior *Night Porter*.) Is she telling us that social organization of any kind, Capitalist or Communist, is the enemy of the state of nature that men and women want and that in it women serve? Scratch and scratch for a fissure of irony here about that view and you can't find it. The pair fall in love on the island. When they return, they are still in love but are forced back, against their wills, into their previous strata and relationship. All we have had is a romantic glimpse into an impossible dream with the male as superior. And is *that* what Wertmüller—acute and "modern" as she is in her film-making—has to tell us?

Comparisons with Barrie's play *The Admirable Crichton* have, of course, been made, but there's a great difference between the two works. Barrie knew exactly why he wrote his play. Within the sugarcoating of his whimsy there was often a surprisingly bitter pill. *Crichton* is not a romance about forlorn egalitarianism, it's a hard statement of the inevitability of class. Crichton himself believes he ought to be a butler

Films Worth Seeing

Coonskin. Cartoon-and-live vicious vaudeville about race-riven New York. Bitter, bawdy, sometimes brilliant.

Dog Day Afternoon. Brooklyn bank robbery. Factual yet fantastic. Best work so far by Al Pacino, the star, and Sidney Lumet, the director.

Nashville. The country-music scene as America-in-essence. Not nearly as daring and deep as it thinks, but some good performances (Lily Tomlin, Keenan Wynn) and some deft direction (Robert Altman).

Smile. How can you satirize a beauty contest? You can't. But if you're going to try, it's good to have this cast and this director (Michael Ritchie).

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again when he returns to England just as he thought he ought to be "the Gov" when he and his employers were castaways. Wertmüller's lovers return to civilization actually expecting that their island romance can continue, and Giannini feels betrayed because it doesn't. Just as I can't see the thematic point of the film, so I can't believe that Wertmüller thought it through to the end. She gives us a glossy Tarzan-Jane story and then makes her lovers seem particularly stupid by expecting it to go on when they return. She *does* it all smashingly, but the doing of it doesn't quite bail out the enterprise.

Hester Street (Midwest). An American woman named Joan Micklin Silver made this film with a script she adapted from a story by Abraham Cahan. It is utterly sincere and utterly abysmal. It's shot in poorly lighted black and white, the sound track is so flat it sounds as if it had been steam-rollered, the camera use and editing would do little credit to a second-year film student, and the cast (with one exception) is notable only for its memory of acting clichés.

To the lower East Side around 1900 come a young Russian Jewish wife and her small son, joining her husband who has preceded them to New York and who has become entangled with another woman. The couple eventually divorce (you can see an orthodox Jewish divorce ceremony) and find other mates; America begins to affect several centuries of Eastern European Jewish tradition. A wonderful subject, but only Carol Kane, as the young wife, has a few valid moments. Everything else is stilted and slow and is phony to the eye. (Never a dirty shirt, for instance, in those crowded poor tenements.) *Hester Street* looks like one of those Films from Great Literature made for educational film catalogues, and is not even a very good example of that questionable genre.

Considerable advance fuss has been made about Silver because she has bucked the System to make and to release her film. That's important, truly worth celebration. But to let the congratulations spill over on to the film that resulted from her independence would be ludicrous. A few weeks ago PBS showed Barbara Loden's *Wanda* (slightly cut), the best American film by a woman that I know and a good film in any regard. Loden also wrote it and plays the leading role. If those who are touting Silver so heavily want to do something for independent production and for women's artistic opportunities, why don't they help get *Wanda* the status it deserves and Loden further chances to direct?

A Remembrance of Alex Bickel

The Morality of Consent

Alexander Bickel's long-run objective, formulated explicitly shortly before his fatal illness was diagnosed, was nothing less than the re-creation of a conservative intellectual tradition that lapsed long ago in this country. He anticipated the project would take at least 10 years and probably the remainder of his career.

If the ambition, so badly stated, sounds almost grandiose, it was not: no one who knew Alex doubts that the task was within his powers. The profundity of his legal scholarship is widely known, but fewer know that his historical learning had earned him a joint appointment in Yale's history department. *The Morality of Consent* (Yale Univ. Press; $10) is evidence that he could as well have held a professorship in political science.

Alex's capacity for extraordinary achievement was rooted in his character and qualities as much as in intelligence and learning. He possessed what Paul Freund called "morality of the mind." He moved away from the political liberalism he had been raised in and which dominated his academic community because he was willing to reexamine any idea if an attack of sufficient intellectual respectability was mounted against it. Compassionate, he rejected sentimentality, the most corrosive enemy of clear thought, and with it a significant portion of standard liberal intellectual baggage. Alex's intellectuality was suffused with zest and wit and gaiety, and these inestimable qualities derived in large measure, I think, from his upbringing. His father, Shlomo Bickel, himself a man of ideas and letters, wrote for a Yiddish paper in New York. Novelists, essayists, journalists, artists, Zionists, persons absorbed in politics, men and women from Europe and America, passed continually through the family apartment. Alex grew up in what amounted to a Jewish intellectual salon. Respect for ideas, for language, for moral courage and for wit were displayed to him in his formative years and remained ever afterward dominant aspects of his personality.

This slim volume, published posthumously, does not of course accomplish the re-creation of conservative intellectual tradition. It was not meant to. But it is a beginning and a noteworthy one because it sets some of the premises in place and displays the mode of thought appropriate to that tradition. To be conservative in the sense that Alex increasingly became is not to be a doctrinaire adherent to particular principles, whether they be liberty or the primacy of the free market or some other. In his sense conservatism was a habit of mind and a quality of spirit—thoughtfulness, prudence, respect for established values and institutions. He gave up the title of liberal but he was not entirely happy with the word conservative either and also refers to himself as a "Whig in the English eighteenth-century sense," and at times suggests that his position is actually the liberal one, as indeed it is, though the corruption of terminology has probably gone too far for him to reclaim it. In truth Alex's thought is too rich, too nuanced, too wide-ranging for easy labeling, or for easy summary. For that reason and also because we were close friends and colleagues for many years, I will attempt here no dispassionate assessment of the entire book.

Alex Bickel's conservatism (to be construed in the Whiggish or classical liberal sense) arose from his view of the law and was brought to a focus by his experience of the university turbulence of the 1960s. A sophisticated analyst and an admirer, though not an uncritical one, of Felix Frankfurter, Alex Bickel realized our law is and should remain organic and evolutionary, not to be redesigned according to abstract symmetries or manipulated for good ends. "It is the premise of our legal order that its own complicated arrangements, although subject to evolutionary change, are more important than any

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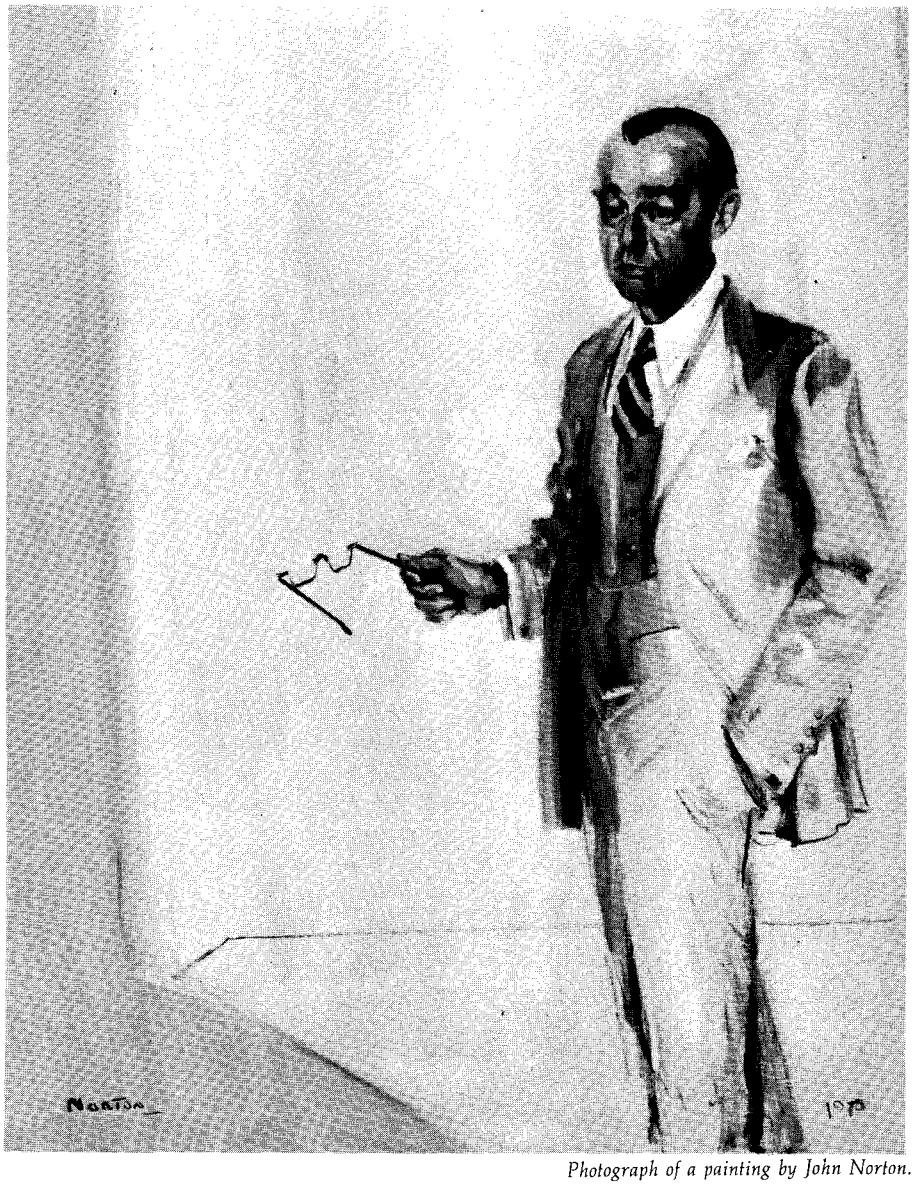
momentary objective." He demonstrated that jurisdictional and procedural issues, the technicalities with which reformers are so impatient, are vital to the integrity of the law. Where others saw obstacles to be evaded or toppled, Alex saw stability, safety from arbitrary power, the means of confining issues so that analysis could be rigorous, allocation of responsibility in accordance with democratic theory, and, by no means least, a mechanism for change that was controlled, explained and accepted by the society as legitimate. This was the morality of process that generated the morality of consent.

Law, in Alex Bickel's view, could rarely be only a command. A ruling, even by the Supreme Court, was final between the parties but was not law for the society in any full sense unless other institutions agreed or at least acquiesced and cooperated in establishing it. For that, more than process is required. The rule itself must lie within the morally permissible range of results, a range determined not by ultimate truth but by society's provisional truths. Alex avoided ultimates since he knew that law, like government generally, if it is to remain human, must be satisfied with provisional intermediate premises, principles in the middle distance.

Because he understood the nature of law, Alex was alert to parallels in social and political processes. In an organic rather than planned society practices and customs are likely to have value that escapes the superficial reformer. The complexities of institutions safeguard individual freedoms, and change occurs at retail rather than wholesale. But Alex was emphatic that morality of process is not enough. Good processes only tend to rule out intolerable results but do not guarantee they will not occur. A morality of ends is also necessary, but that morality must not be rigid, must allow a wide range of outcomes as tolerable, and is itself composed of partial and evolving principles. Each individual must severely ration the occasions upon which he places his own morality above society's decisions. Alex was in short a civilized, thoughtful, reasonable man, allowing wide room for disagreement, able to hold opinions tentatively, but in the end a man with morals and principles not to be compromised. Hence his affinity for Edmund Burke.



Photograph of a painting by John Norton.

One precipitating factor in Alex's turn to political philosophy was the university tumult of the '60s. That turmoil, accompanied by threats, violence, assaultive rhetoric, all in the name of angrily asserted transcendental ideals, was a miniature French Revolution, a "chaos of levity and ferocity," in Burke's phrase. Alex was astonished and outraged, not merely with students prepared, in a spasm of mindless self-righteousness, to destroy institutions it had taken generations or even centuries to build, but even more with those faculty members who, at the first obscenity or classroom disruption, instantly abandoned the ideal of rationality. The residue of that anti-intellectual, anti-institutional time is still with us, legitimated by our tolerance. It could easily occur again, and Alex's argument here is, unfortunately, by no means out of date.

It is no wonder, then, that Alex Bickel found himself at home with Burke and the Whig philosophy. He opposed that tradition to "liberal" or "contractarian" thought that "rests on a vision of individual rights that have a clearly defined, independent existence predating society and are derived from a natural, if imagined, contract. Society must bend to these rights." Alex objected to contractarian thought because of its "moralism not a little affected with authoritarianism." Since authoritarianism conflicts with liberal belief in free speech and popular sovereignty, "the liberal contractarian finds his escape in the Constitution, which, speaking through the Supreme Court limits majority rule." Contractarians welcome an activist and moralistic Court; Alex Bickel did not.

Judicial authoritarianism was the least of what Alex feared from contractarian principles, though he thought it bad enough in itself and worse when, by disrespect for procedures and issues of legitimate authority in the name of moral imperatives, it inculcated attitudes that are frightening in more powerful places. Ultimately the contractarian rhetoric of transcendent principles and inherent rights, moralism that

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rejects pragmatism and compromise, when taken up by a mass movement and joined to populist impulses, can produce sheer horror. The contractarian thrust toward ever more equality destroys intermediate power centers and leaves society composed of individual particles helpless against the power of the state. That is what Burke saw in the French Revolution and what Alex Bickel saw in communism, nazism and in the tendency of much well-intended liberal thought of our time.

This book, brilliant as it is, would certainly not have been Alex Bickel's final word. It was intended as his first word in an extended dialogue with the intellectual community, and it is so insightful and provocative that the knowledge there will be no more is not merely tantalizing, it is heartbreaking.

Robert H. Bork

Robert H. Bork is solicitor general of the United States.

Books Considered

William Carlos Williams: Poet from Jersey by Reed Whittemore

(Houghton Mifflin; $10.95)

Every biographer makes his subject over in his own image. This is not true in the sense that the biographer necessarily projects his own personality into his subject. The biographer, rather, remakes his subject according to the style that he possesses or that possesses him. A style is an interpretation, characterized as much by what it leaves out as by its distortions of what it includes. There is no truth-telling style as such, in the sense of a neutral transmitting of things as they are or were. A style is a rhetoric, a mode of figurative language which transforms whatever it describes into its own patterns of thought and evaluation. Whatever Miss T. eats turns into Miss T. RW's biography turns WCW into RW.

The transforming power of a style functions as much in literary criticism, at one extreme, and, at the other, in the biography of a man of action who wrote little, as it does in a literary biography. Literary biography, however, is an especially interesting case of the fact that the style is the man. The genre, moreover, is much practiced now. It has recent distinguished representatives, for example, the biography of Emily Dickinson by Richard Sewell, and the one just published of Edith Wharton by R.W.B. Lewis. It is perhaps worth focusing a moment on the special characteristics of literary biography, apropos of an evaluation of the present biography of Williams by Reed Whittemore.

No doubt the biography of a "man of action"—a politician, an industrialist, a criminal, a soldier, an explorer—is based on documents as much as is a literary biography. The role of documents in the former case is different, however, since the reader seeks primarily a narrative of events and an interpretation of them. At the other extreme, literary criticism confronts texts directly, "for their own sake." It may ignore altogether the life of the man who wrote them. Literary biography is somewhere between. Hardly anyone would read or write a literary biography if he were not interested in the writings of the author in question. If William Carlos Williams were not a major poet, who would write or read his life? The facts of the life of a writer are usually relatively uninteresting, compared to the life of the explorer, the criminal, the general, the captain of industry. A sense of the greatness of a writer can be maintained in the relative absence of detailed knowledge of his or her life, as in the case of Sappho or even of Shakespeare. To many readers the facts of the life of a writer seem irrelevant to his writings, curiously detached from them or related to them only indirectly. It may be that many people read literary biographies in order to escape direct confrontation of literature as such. They need to persuade themselves that all they need to know about a poem or a novel are the circumstances under which it was written and the overt opinions of its author. This was probably the insight behind W.H. Auden's remarks in *A Certain World*, cited somewhat uneasily by Whittemore in the middle of his book: "Biographies of writers, whether written by others or themselves, are always superfluous and usually in bad taste . . . A writer's private life is, or should be, of no concern to anybody except himself, his family and his friends."

Any literary biography, however,

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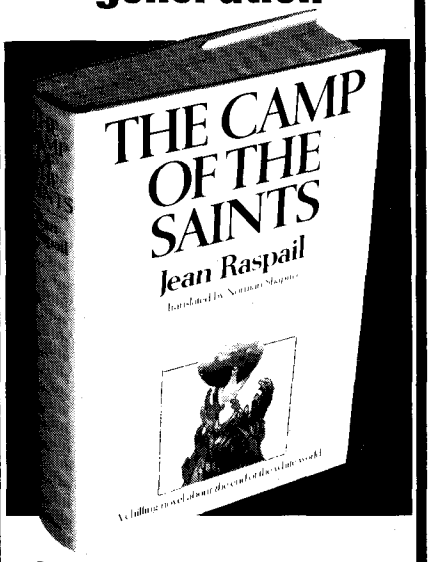

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contains much explicit or implicit literary criticism, as well as the narrative of the events of a life. One reads Whittemore on Williams not for new facts, though there are some, derived primarily from unpublished journals and letters, from interviews with Mrs. Williams and others. One reads Whittemore's book for his image of Williams the man, his portrait in the style of Whittemore, and for Whittemore's interpretation of Williams' writings.

Inherent in the genre of literary biography is an almost irresistible penchant for reading what the author wrote as a more or less direct transcription of his life. The writings are explained as mirrorings of the author's experience. Reed Whittemore happily functions within this assumption. For him, literature and life are congruent, one the index of the other. What is the "style" of Whittemore's portrait, and what form of representations characterizes his reading of Williams' work?

Whittemore's biography is presented in nine big blocks or chapters, each encompassing a separable period in Williams' life, from "Early Life" and "Marriage" on down to "The Cures" of old age. Each chapter tends to be organized around a figurative catchword: "Stealing," "Causes," etc. The story of Williams' life is told with circumstantiality, warmth and verve. There are good narratives, for example, of Williams' relations with Pound, with Robert McAlmon, or with such obscure figures as Emanuel Carnevali. There is a good description of the disastrous episode of the abortive appointment as poetry consultant at the Library of Congress (Williams was accused of being a Communist and prevented from taking up the post). A vivid picture emerges of Williams as an impulsive, even irascible man; unabashedly sexual in his responses to women; a "kindly tough-guy doctor"; a compulsive writer; somewhat paranoid in his hatred of T. S. Eliot and in his sense of being isolated and unrecognized (though he was long undervalued); sometimes believing himself the victim of a philistine conspiracy (*In the American Grain* is read as the expression of this); a sharp observer and listener, both of things and of people; a true witness of the actual conditions of the urban poor, his patients; gifted with a rough and ready homemade American hard-won skill at recording in words what he heard and saw. Whittemore's Williams is an individualist, standing by "his own perceptual integrity," "as American as apple pie": "He could not write by pulling the blinds down on the world; he had to have the world, he even had to copy down exactly what he heard and saw in the world, feeling that anything less than a copying would be a violation of the here and now. In other words he was at heart something of an old-fashioned materialist."

If Whittemore's Williams is as American as apple pie, Whittemore's portraiture is also in an American style: commonsensical, distrustful of abstractions, of "metaphysics," of ideology. His Williams is in the Romantic tradition, a man expressing his own feelings and perceptions (Williams is always his own persona), committed to the subject/object relation and to spontaneously growing "organic form," copying the things and people he has himself experienced. Whittemore has ironic scorn for the critics who impose a fancy metaphysic on Williams. Whittemore's Williams is most to be praised for the honesty and truth of his copying, as is the Williams of Robert Coles' recent book on the Passaic stories and the Stecher trilogy (*William Carlos Williams: The Knack of Survival in America;* Rutgers University Press, $8.50).

Such a reading appears to be refreshingly straightforward, down-to-earth like Williams himself. The trouble is that it is itself an ideology, the ideology of those who value literature for its accurate mirroring and who imagine that it can unambiguously attain such a mirroring. The rhetoric of Whittemore's style is what might be called "synecdoche as put down." It is a style derived, at several removes, from Gertrude Stein and Ernest Hemingway. Such a style picks up a phrase from a quotation or from the critic's own language and then repeats it over and over, in sentences self-consciously simple in diction and syntax. The phrase in its repetition becomes a shorthand for the entire region of experience or thought from which it comes, until that region is diminished to something so silly that no man or woman could take it seriously. This powerful reductive rhetoric is used throughout Whittemore's book to ridicule anything other than the mimetic realism of his own reading of Williams. It is used to ridicule Pound, HD, Williams' critics, Yeats, even Williams himself, as in the account of *Paterson,* or of the poet's struggles with the "variable foot," or of his commitment to "mind and thing":

> *The connection was in the preoccupation with mind-and-thing, what the thing did to the mind, the mind to the thing. WCW was stuck with mind-and-thing for life after his rounds with the artists on 14th Street, stuck with it in its strengths and its weaknesses. . . . He didn't like to stay in the tower long but to rush up and get the truth and justice and rush back down with them; but except for these differences he was with Yeats. He liked tower-sitting too and he felt that the mind-and-thing relationship was what art was about. . . . on a clear dry Sunday afternoon anyone who was out there [at Kreymborg's shack in the Palisades] . . . could look across the meadows to the Hackensack—and perhaps further to the Passaic—and if he were lucky he could also see a small cloud of dust traversing the meadows easterly. That was WCW in his Ford car, coming for mind-and-thing.*

Some readers of Williams will feel that this mode of exposition leaves out as much as it includes about what is going on in the words of Williams' writings. Such readers may want to add to Whittemore's remaking of Williams into his synecdochic style the complementary portraits of other critics, perhaps, for example, the Williams of Joseph Riddle's *The Inverted Bell,* a poet of the

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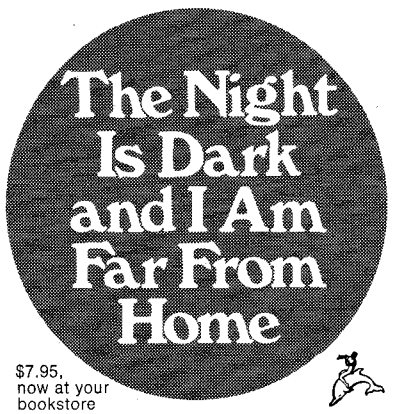

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search for "primordial origins," beyond mind and thing, a poet to be set side by side with Hölderlin, Heidegger and Jacques Derrida, perhaps the Williams of Hugh Kenner's *A Homemade World*, a poet who fashions poems that are "things made," objects "he could spin round on one corner," perhaps one of the several other WCWs other critics have constructed. Williams' work, like that of any distinguished writer, yields itself to multiple contradictory readings. The chief limitation of Whittemore's book is to have presented so exclusively one reading and to have had relatively little tolerance for the other things Williams' words say and do.

J. Hillis Miller

J. Hillis Miller is professor of English at Yale.

My Father: a Remembrance by Hugo Black, Jr.

(Random House; $8.95)

Memoirs of the great by members of their families are generally disasters, as witness the Roosevelts. They are either excessively filial or vengefully scabrous. Hugo Black, Jr.'s "remembrance" of his father comes close to the filial, but it has a slight acerbic vein. This salvages what might otherwise have been a set of cloying reminiscences cast in reconstructed and too often banal conversations which are replete with "Daddy," "Son" and the Justice's favorite word, "fella."

Whoever does the full portrait of Justice Black some day will find this folksy sketch useful, but he will also need a sense of historic irony which the memoir lacks. A cracker Populist on the US Supreme Court is reminiscent of Bernard Shaw's fantasy of a king who was a Communist. As a personality Hugo Black was all of a piece, an enduring figure hewn out of a single stone, whatever its flaws, but his career was compact with paradoxes. An economic radical, he was Franklin Roosevelt's revenge on a rigidly reactionary Court and did more than anyone else to turn it around; but he was also a deep traditionalist in his Puritan values. A red-earth boy from Clay County, Alabama, a self-made lawyer who became a local police judge and county solicitor and then made good on a daring bid for the US Senate seat, he was there at the historic moment when Roosevelt looked around for a firebrand to burn the dead wood out of the Supreme Court. Despite his sketchy formal schooling and the taint of the Ku Klux Klan in his political career, he became one of the unquestioned greats in the Court's history.

As it happens I was marginally involved in the storm that developed in 1937 over Black's earlier Klan membership, while the newly appointed Justice was on a holiday trip in England. As an editor of the *Nation* I had strongly supported both Black's militant Senate career and his Court appointment. When the Klan story broke I got a cable from Harold Laski saying Black was with him and suggesting I have a talk with him. When Black's boat docked at Norfolk, he escaped from a besieging army of reporters, and we drove to his home in Virginia. We were up most of the night as he told his story of a crusading Populist in the deep South who had felt it was legitimate to join every organization in order to beat his rivals whom the "interests" supported. I felt he had been foolish and naive, but I knew that his basic humanism was light-years remove from the Klan's bigotry. I continued my support of him, shocked many of my liberal associates and friends, but felt my judgment was vindicated by the qualities Black showed on the Court. Hugo, Jr. used to say, in introducing his father, that after the Court appointment, "they talked about him as a man who went around in a white robe scaring black people. Now they talk about him as a man who goes about in a black robe scaring white people."

Yet he sheds little light on the sources of Black's thinking in either phase. What tied them together was his Populism, which was fuzzy enough at the start to include his Klan dalliance in order to win votes, but became sharper, clearer, more humanist, once he had a life tenure and judicial independence from his Alabama origins. Black was a passionate, naive, single-purposed, stubborn, self-assured man, a hyperthyroidal dynamo of energy, a loving but also domineering father, a shrewd if sometimes difficult colleague, a hard-driving competitor throughout his career, always bent on winning.

I call him a primitive—and a great one—not to belittle him but to get at the overriding quality that made him the distinctive person and mind he was. Black's primitivism had three elements. He was an original. He was a reductionist. He was in a deep sense a traditionalist, harking back to an earlier and more perfect time which his radicalism was meant to recover.

For all his overflowing kindness he must have been a hard man to live with, because he was so sure he was right. It was this self-assurance that won him his bride, Josephine Foster, whom he wooed unrelentingly and irresistibly. It gave him his nickname, "Old Ego," when he was a practicing lawyer. It made him hold his sons up to highly demanding standards of work and achievement (he tried to educate Hugo, Jr. much as James Mill had done with John Stuart Mill), made him harsh when they broke his rules, made him an intervening father right up to the marriage decision. One detects in the son's affectionate book a degree of ambivalence and a residual undercurrent of hostility to the father's overshadowing masterfulness. All the colors Black used were primary colors. He was a reactive man, highly sensitive and vulnerable, and his reactions were raw, primary reactions.

His reductionism is apparent in his whole career and mental cast. There were people and there were the "interests," the forces of light and the forces of darkness, and life, law and politics consisted of an unending battle between

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them. Luckily he never had to be an economist, which allowed him to strip his Populist radicalism down to a general hostility to the big corporations. He similarly resolved the complex problem of finding a balance between individual freedom and national cohesion by declaring freedom a First Amendment absolute and thus denying that the problem of balance even existed.

We get some glimpses of Black's relation to two of his associates who were anti-absolutist—Felix Frankfurter and Robert H. Jackson. The great feud was, of course, the Jackson-Black feud, which erupted into Jackson's historic Nuremberg cable, sent in heat because Jackson suspected a plot by Black to keep him from the Chief Justiceship. Jackson had the more interesting mind and literary style, but he lacked the massive moral strength which Black had somehow achieved.

Black also had an adversary relation with Frankfurter, but Hugo, Jr. notes a greater warmth between the two men than was generally known. There is a touching account of Frankfurter, after his resignation, being driven to Black's home, where Black sat and talked with him in the car. At the start each had thought he would proselytize the other, only to find in the other not a potential follower but a formidable opponent. Yet they learned to discover and respect each other's immense gifts. Each man was forceful, self-assured and vain; each was self-made, with great strength of will; each in a different way was a master of the legal and analytical techniques required for great juristic thinking.

Yet in their basic approach they were poles apart. Frankfurter knew everything and everybody, pulled strings, pressured, proselytized, hobnobbed with Presidents and statesmen, while Black preferred the private realm of his family and a few friends, and—while no novice at internal Court politics—did his political operations less blatantly. Frankfurter saw society through mirrors within mirrors, was obsessed with the complexity of things, and had an ever present sense of both the ironies and paradoxes of history. Black cut deftly through seeming complexities to the core realities to which he had reduced history and society. He felt that on their crucial disagreements Frankfurter didn't content himself with the results of the Court vote but was busy with his diaries and memoranda as an appeal to the higher court of posterity. He was right about it, as the newly published Frankfurter Diaries (edited by Joseph P. Lash) attest. As for Black's own private judicial notes and memoranda, he insisted adamantly, at the end, on their being burned, and it was the son's last melancholy fulfillment of the father's harsh command.

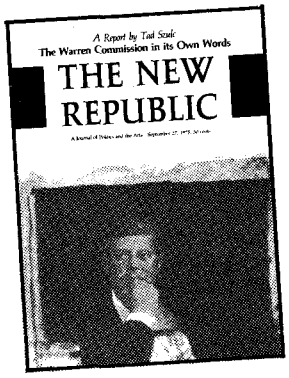
There will be guesses about Black's motive in ordering the pyre of his manuscripts. My own hunch is that as a believer in the stern Puritan value system, and as a supreme rationalist, Black wanted to be judged by what he had actually written and done, not by some self-serving gloss. It may have been his last dissenting opinion, stressing the absolute individual right of privacy, as against Frankfurter's prevailing view.

In his last years he relaxed some of his absolutism, especially on cases involving the violence of the '60s, where the issue was freedom of assembly and petition as against social order. He denied any change, but stressed his fear of a swing of opinion against the Court as a result of the extreme positions it had taken. When illness came—he suffered from an arterial disease related to one which had killed one of his brothers—he seemed to lose the will to live. The doctors felt there was no physiological reason for his decline, but it was as if he had made his last reduction, decided this was the end, and held to it with his usual stubbornness. He was buried with several copies, in his pocket, of the little cheap pamphlet printings of the US Constitution which he used to brandish and read from, at every challenge.

Max Lerner

Max Lerner is a nationally syndicated columnist.

"Perhaps . . . only a new examination of the [Kennedy] case will satisfy the people."



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The Mekong River Expedition, 1866-1873 by Milton Osborne

(Liveright; $8.95)

The Mekong River ("the Great River") for most Americans is an Asian river which was discovered in 1965 and disappeared in 1975. But for those who are intrigued by the mystery and adventure of the East, the story of six Frenchmen and their expedition fighting upstream from Saigon to Yunnan is as exciting as it is historically illuminating. It is high drama, based on gross miscalculations and splendid misinformation. The account comes from letters and journals principally of Francis Garnier, second in command, with marvelous sketches by a fellow naval officer on the expedition, Louis Delaporte. Milton Osborne, Director of the British Institute in Southeast Asia, based in Singapore, uses these materials and his own experience on the Mekong to write this authentic thriller.

To grasp the idea, one must understand the realities of French imperialism in the 19th century. The French entered Saigon in 1858, but the project wasn't paying off. There was no rice surplus for sale and no one had yet thought of rubber plantations. But "nations without colonies are dead," said Garnier, and he convinced his superiors of the wisdom of the Mekong route to China. "The navagability of the Mekong . . . there is a task worthy of raising the passions of our century with its love for great undertakings," reported French Adm. Paul Reveillere.

With little planning the expedition commanded by Doudart de Lagreé left Saigon June 5, 1866 in a steam powered gunboat, which they used as far as

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Pnompenh. By July 7, above the Cambodia town of Stung Treng, they came to the first formidable rapids, described thus by Garnier: ". . . in the middle of a broad strikingly white sea of water, full of whirlpools and flotsam, a few forest giants and dark rocks still withstood the assault, while columns of spray rose and fell ceaselessly on their summits . . . The noise was deafening, the spectacle fascinating to behold. Crossing this vast area of water, moving in every direction, with the current running at a speed that I estimated could not be less than ten or eleven miles an hour, our fragile craft was dragged through the middle of rocks and trees, hidden and tossed in the spume." The experience did not frustrate them. After all, perhaps the river might be navigable at other water levels, at other times of the year.

As they portaged and marched through jungles and swamps, they suffered terribly from fevers, dysentery and leeches, but made little of it. "The nineteenth century," says Osborne, "was a stoic age." By March 1867 they were assembled in Laos, following the river. Stretches were dull. "A day without a new emotional experience," wrote Garnier, "is a disappointment." They finally reached the city of Vientiane, which the Thais had sacked the previous year and captured their unfaithful vassal, who they then displayed in a cage in Bangkok. Above Vientiane there was again a mighty succession of rapids.

The further north they went the more unsettled the political situation. The local rulers now were under the sway of the Shan states or the Burmese king. And they suspected the machinations of the British, who they were convinced they would see trying to beat them up the river, at every turn and shadow. Finally in October they reached Yunnan province and were greeted by the Chinese authorities, who told them imperfectly of a Muslim rebellion to the west. The meeting with the Chinese produced one of the many cultural vignettes in the book. A Chinese official attempted to remove Lagreé's hat to discover his third eye, it being well known in China that Europeans had a third eye to look secretly for wealth while appearing to gaze in another direction.

With permission to go to Kunming, they set out through the high mountains, coming on occasion to low tropical valleys and glimpses of the Red River. In the snow on one plain they passed hundreds of coffins, containing the victims of a cholera epidemic. In Kunming they finally found evidence of the fabled riches of China in the well stocked shops and general prosperity of the walled city. The local general was a colorful Moslem who had sworn loyalty to the government against the rebels. He lay before the explorers a great feast and entertained them, like Lyndon Johnson, by lifting his robes and displaying his battle wounds. The French were determined to follow the Mekong, so in January 1868 they headed north and west toward lake Ta Li, the center of the Muslim rebellion, against the wishes of the Chinese authorities. En route is another poignant scene: Lagreé left behind, dying in an unheated room in the cold winter. Advanced ameboic dysentery abscessed his liver. The French expedition doctor finally operated to drain the abscess. Lagreé died on March 12, the doctor removing his heart and placing it in a lead box to return to France.

Meanwhile Garnier and his party were rebuked by the self-styled Sultan, who addressed them in imperial tones. "If I chose not to take the lives of those who accompany you, it is because of my concern for their position as foreigners and respect for the letters of recommendation they carry. But let them hasten to depart." So the French began their retreat, harassed by the Muslims and the weather. When they learned of Lagreé's death, the Mekong expedition ended. They decided to carry out Lagreé's coffin, finally reaching the Yangtze, then Shanghai and back to Saigon, where they arrived on June 29, 1868, after two years and 24 days.

Controversy over the wisdom of the project, internal French political developments, exploration and tragedy on the Red River and Osborne's visit to the area 100 years later, conclude this superb book. It is a tale of heroism that has seldom been duplicated, spurred by the continuing, fatal attraction of the "Great River."

Robert J. Myers

Robert J. Myers, publisher of *TNR*, served with the OSS in China and CIA in Southeast Asia for 15 years.

Coming

B.H. Haggin on Toscanini
Robert Coles on *Tell Me A Riddle*

The Ordeal of Civility: Freud, Marx, Levi-Strauss And the Jewish Struggle With Modernity

by John Murray Cuddihy

(Basic Books; $11.95)

As the first press-run ended, and bound and jacketed copies of *The Ordeal of Civility* began to spill into the editorial offices of Basic Books, the publishers of this fascinating book must have contemplated its debut into polite intellectual forums with the ambivalent anticipation of a parent delivering up his child prodigy at the gates of a parochial school. Yet as I write, months after pub date, reaction to the book's appearance seems to have been *sotto voce*. Although the book has been received with generous praise in what Robert Alter, writing in *Commentary*, identifies ominously as "some circles"—by which I presume he means *National Review* and *The New York Times'* daily book column; although it has been reviewed, however critically, in *Time* and *Commentary* (figureheads, respectively, of the bar-car and salon intellects); and although rumor has it that the book has been selling out with a surreptitious rustling noise from the Harvard Coop, it has for the most part been handled with skittish ambivalence, and all too often by third-string critics writing in literary back alleys (the *New York Times Book Review* has, I believe, yet to recognize its existence, although it was a runner-up last spring for the National Book Award). More, only two men with a respectable recognition factor—Alter, as mentioned, and Prof. E. Digby Baltzell writing in *Worldview*—have attempted to do it to death in a really bloody way, though the violence of Baltzell's review almost makes up for the fact that there is only one of him. He quotes de Tocqueville— "it is less the work itself than its tendency, which I consider dangerous"—and hints powerfully that so pernicious a thing were best uncreated: like, one presumes, the atom bomb.

For Cuddihy has done precisely what Baltzell accuses him of having done: he has written a book about civility that is itself most incivil in the context of contemporary Western discourse. Deliberately tackling what he himself would call a "ritually delicate" subject, he has written a deflationary study of modern Jewish thought in the last century-and-a-half. He has not only

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Television, Politics, and the News
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"In this detailed and critical study of broadcast news, Diamond argues that the impact of TV on national audiences is considerably *less* than is generally believed. . . . A worthwhile rebuttal to the myth of the 'video-tranquilized' viewers and the often-heard charge that the East Coast media is packed with liberals and radicals busily distorting events leftward. Diamond gives all three networks low marks for completeness, accuracy and orginality of presentation: no wonder the audience is paying less attention than it used to."—*The Kirkus Reviews*

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broken wind in the midst of Yeats' "ceremony of innocence"; he has—with, some people suggest, malevolence aforethought—committed what C.S. Lewis called the "grossest" incivility of "thinking about the man who addresses us instead of thinking about what he says"; and he has actually chosen to insult a holder of what he describes as "victim status." His rudeness is so unheard of—so unexpected a social breach—that it leaves his company dumb. To protest too loudly the offense is to emphasize it.

Cuddihy's broadest thesis is that Jewry and the modern West have been at odds with one another for the past 150 years, as a tribal and essentially premodern people have confronted a civilization that represents secularized Christianity compounded with specialized, "dedifferentiated" modernism; and that celebrants of the so-called "Judeo-Christian" civilization have been fraudulently disguising the schism that has prevented such a world from coalescing. He perceives that "a kind of predifferentiated crudeness on the culture system level, and a kind of undifferentiated rudeness on the social system level of behavior, is believed to be—by certain Jews themselves—not only an integral part of what it means to be a Jew, but integral to the *religious* essence of Judaism, and not an accidental result of Exile or of socioeconomic disadvantage." "Socialization into modernity is, at best," he concludes "a difficult matter. It is least difficult, perhaps, for the members of the WASP core culture descended from Calvinist Christianity. They, in a sense, are 'ego-syntonic' to [in harmony with] modernity." And he proceeds to illustrate his theory by taking what he calls the sociology of knowledge—and what Alter calls the reductionist—approach to argue that the grand ideologies of Marx, Freud and Levi-Strauss derived their inspiration from the resentments experienced by their founders, members of a pariah minority but recently escaped from the *shtetl* and hence newcomers to a world that they regarded "in dismay, with wonder, anger, and punitive objectivity."

According to Cuddihy, Jewish emancipation, while it offered the emancipated many of the civic privileges and duties of Western parliamentary democracy, brought them at the same time into violent collision with the "Protestant Etiquette," that elaborate conglomeration of polite ritual evolved from feudal *courtoisie* to meet the exigencies of a complex commercial society where life is not, as in the ghetto, "with people" but rather "with strangers" who cannot be accommodated as members of an extended family. "Good manners" entailed such things as wearing a morning coat and lemon-colored gloves; telling hurtling strangers in the street," I *am* so sorry—my fault entirely"; serving business rivals tea as if they were maiden aunts. They were at once superficial and fundamental: at once the appurtenances of a civilization and its essence. And to the assimilating protagonists of coarse authenticity, they were at best evasive and at worst hypocritical. More, they were foreign and unnatural.

Many assimilating Jews in the vanguard of emancipation, however, mastered this etiquette and found themselves thereby in a ticklishly uncomfortable situation. On the one hand, they revered their people and the roots from which they sprang; on the other, they felt shame and distaste for the ghetto and bourgeois Jew alike. It is, Cuddihy believes, "this recoil from the vulgarity of their own Jewish community, in which we find the covert root of the social and intellectual creativity of the Diaspora intellectuals . . ." And because "To accept the achievement of Western modernization at its own self-estimation would have been to downgrade themselves," these intellectuals turned theodicy into ideology, at once explaining the Jewish condition and apologizing for it: a sleight of hand accomplished by universalizing the Jewish plight. Beneath it all, we—you—are all Jews. "In 'scientific' socialism as in 'scientific' psychoanalysis," as Cuddihy puts it, "the normative and the cognitive are conflated." Thus Freud considered politeness to be the anti-Semitism of the middle classes: his "id" was in fact the crude, unruly "Yid" in Everyman, and psychoanalysis "a compromise strategy for living-the-diaspora" by which his assimilating bourgeois-Jewish patients were able to keep up "polite" appearances by day, giving the id-Yid full rein only during the 50-minute hour. Thus Marx considered civility to be repression, as well as a disguise by which the greedy operations of a capitalist society might be cloaked by civic-minded obeisances: in his infamous "Essay on the Jews" he attacked such self-serving ideologies by exposing the hypocritical contradictions implicit in the behavior of the only group with which he was thoroughly familiar, although to his mind all men secretly fit the Jewish stereotype. Thus Levi-Strauss, unable

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to stomach the "insult" paid Jewish history by the celebrators of the modernizing West, rejected Western history with his declaration that "to reach reality we must first repudiate experience."

The unease with which *The Ordeal of Civility* has been received is traceable to suspicions that so rude an assault must be malignantly inspired: that is, to be blunt, that it must be anti-Semitic. Most of its reviewers, however—save perhaps Alter ("I do not presume to know Cuddihy's motives, which may well be associated with a kind of uneasy admiration of Jewish intellectuality. But . . .") and Baltzell, who seems to agree with Alter that Cuddihy's theories are at least *tantamount* to anti-Semitism—appear to have concluded that it is not. If there is more to these suspicions than the Pavlovian paranoia that sets in when the ritually sacred comes in for some adverse criticism, then it proceeds, I believe, mainly from an exaggerated interpretation of Cuddihy's thesis—an exaggeration, it is only fair to add, that is likely caught by contagion from the book itself.

"The clear tendency of [Cuddihy's] historical exposition," says Alter, "is to represent Jewish social thought as inherently meretricious, disruptive, vindictive . . ."; Baltzell thinks Cuddihy guilty of "dismissing [the ideas of Freud and Marx] as impolite products of Jewish resentment." That Cuddihy does indeed root both Marx's and Freud's systems in "resentment" and that indeed he does believe that their intellectual descendants and elaborators (and perverters) have frequently exercised a pernicious influence on the West (as his brilliant chapter on the confrontation in Chicago between the "two Hoffmans," Judge Julius and Abbie, attests) is beyond contention; yet I see no particular evidence that he has talked himself into "dismissing" them thereby, anymore than I see evidence that his critics, most of whom find reason to identify Cuddihy in their reviews as "a (lapsed) Catholic," are in so doing intending to dismiss *The Ordeal of Civility* as a serious work. (Leon Edel has traced the artistic impulse behind Edmund Wilson's *oeuvre* to Wilson's emotional "wound" without in this way discrediting that *oeuvre*.) And although Alter refers to Cuddihy's "ostensibly descriptive terms," other reviewers have accepted those terms as warmly descriptive: "Like those he has studied and admired," writes Donald Klinefelter in *The Review of Books and Religion*, "the author prefers the coarseness which reveals to the courtesy that conceals fundamental disagreements."

Cuddihy, in fact—three-fourths of the way through the book and deciding, perhaps, that he has been incivil long enough—leaves off speaking about the Jews exclusively and begins talking about the rest of us. At the start of the book, he noted that his study is "in the end, only methodologically Judeocentric"; now he insists that "All of us, any of us, are only relatively modern, be we Irish, Jewish, German, black, whatever"; "The almost continuous immigration of Jews into Western Europe and Anglo-America from the culturally 'backward' [note those quotation marks from a man who claimed on Bill Buckley's "Firing Line" that he is not a cultural relativist!] areas of the pale has brought it about that they have lived a revolutionary situation of the 20th-century type [*i.e.* an ethinc clash between modern and early modern or pre-modern cultures] from the 19th century up to our day." Like the "great unassimilated Jews of the West" whose thought he has been dissecting, Cuddihy universalizes his theory of modern Jewish history by extending it to the history, not only of Third World peoples encountering the modernizers of the West, but of the modernizers themselves. (A welcome gesture, apparently: "Mr. Cuddihy's most important message," said *Hadassah*, wrongly, ". . . is about the devouring effects of the Coca-Cola civilization of the West on the rest of the planet.")

When you come right down to it, Cuddihy—who is every bit as much the gentleman as Mr. Baltzell, the patrician from Philadelphia—probably underwent an ordeal of incivility to write his book. Although he might have consoled himself simply by reflecting that good manners in society are not to be confused, ever, with good manners in print, he concludes *The Ordeal of Civility* by extending a gracious hand. He quotes Dietrich Bonhoeffer, whose *Arkandisziplin* served to "manage" "the differentiations of modernity"—". . . Why . . . do I decide on expression of thoroughly penultimate human solidarity?"—and observes, "Modernity, child of Protestant Christianity, 'acts back' on its parent, secularizing it out of sight, offended by the unsightliness of its own visibility . . . . the *ius divinum* self-destructs; a new *ius civile* is all in all."

Chilton Williamson, Jr.

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Reconsideration

Towards a Better Life by Kenneth Burke

(Univ. of California Press; $6)

In the first months of 1929 when the American economy was taking a crash course in self-destruction Kenneth Burke wrote a novel called *Towards a Better Life*. Or rather he composed, lest his sanity yield to the general chaos, a multitude of elegant and poignant sentences which were published in 1932 as a book: many of them had already appeared as a series of epistles or declamations in *The Dial, Hound and Horn* and *Pagany*. If sales are a measure of success, the book did not succeed, it languished for many years. I do not know how Burke persuaded Harcourt, Brace to publish the book at all, unless he argued that readers accustomed to the repetitive miseries of the daily press would take particular pleasure in a book of well-tempered, inventive prose. He recalls that a friend asked him, referring to *Towards a Better Life* or some other equally neglected work from the same typewriter, "Isn't the first edition of that book very rare?", and was answered: "Not as rare as the second." In 1966 the second edition of *Towards a Better Life* was published by the University of California Press not, I think, because of any public clamor to have the book in print again but because the Press felt that Burke's sole novel was something the public ought to read. I have no information about the sales of this second edition, but it is my understanding that its readers constitute a secret society and that members recognize each other in the street by a demented glow issuing from the eyes.

I mention the origin of Burke's novel to account for the unapologetic gorgeousness of its style. In a more opulent age the style might appear excessive, too much of a good thing, decadent rather than trim. The motto for Burke's decorum is given in a line from Blake, quoted in the novel: "Bring out number weight & measure in a year of dearth." Otherwise put: in a grim time a writer is more likely to please by taking the harm out of life than by merely transcribing it. In any event he has a better chance of pleasing the others if he starts composing sentences which please himself. John

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Neal, the letter-writing narrator of *Towards a Better Life*, finds that his unavowed conflicts and even his recurrent melancholy memories separate themselves from him while he busies himself trying to express them; they are superseded by the engrossment of his task. The bleaker the conditions, the richer the opportunity of transcending them. It has been argued that Henry James' most fruitful themes are absence, void, nullity and loss, since his imagination took special pleasure in making the most of things, turning minuses into the most exotic pluses. A writer may be master of his soul in his sentences when, in his domestic circumstances, he is victim of every wind that blows. I support the common theory that art is compensation for life.

But this means that in art the rules of the appalling game must be changed. If life's forces cannot be changed, their proportions and relations must be revised, the ingredients must be differently mixed. "I had become convinced," Burke's hero reports, "that by the exercise of the intelligence life could be made much simpler and art correspondingly complex; that any intensity in living could be subdued beneath the melancholy of letters." Daily life enforces its rhetoric, and a pretty crass rhetoric it is, so the mind deflects the blow, establishes its own rhythm against the deadly hours. The theory of Naturalism was always a dreary business because it made the mind a slave to external forces and events, the writer could only take dictation from the world, his imagination was a dictaphone. John Neal finds the richest concessions not in life or New York but in language, where sentences, images, figures, cadences and metaphors offer themselves as the ingredients of an alternative rhetoric, sweeter news than anything in the newspapers. Life distinguishes the strong from the weak, but there is no reason to think its categories impeccable: "the apparently weak," Neal says, "are merely schooled to other strength and may be easily enduring hardships which are intense and even still unnamed, while the man who triumphs has done so by acting in accordance with other rules, like one who would win at tennis by shooting his opponent." In another version: "there are many kinds of effort which people without spirit and without physical enterprise are best equipped for, just as cockroaches are more likely than tigers to flourish in sinks." Writers being insatiable are never appeased, but they find in language nearly every gift their hearts desire. If the imagination decides to turn itself into a mole in the hope of learning what an eagle cannot imagine, language supports the plan and offers the imagination facilities for that research. You can find nearly everything you want in language, if you have a gift for looking in the right place; it is like the British Museum or the Library of Congress. So our hero, John Neal, victim of a broken heart if life were permitted to record a final verdict, brings his trouble to the dictionary and is appeased. Language, the inventiveness of an imagination nurtured upon the lexicon, allows him to move from conditions of tragedy through a remarkable rhetoric of the grotesque towards a better life; that is, towards a comic perspective in which crimes appear as mistakes and every offense is pardonable. Style turns bad debts into aesthetic assets.

Now read on. John Neal, our gnarled hero, is by his own confession guilty of poverty, envy, sexual jealousy; his only verifiable asset is a competence merely verbal. But while scorning his character do not scorn his ingenuity. A lover who, the more easily to discard his mistress, discards the love that bound him to her, thinks that he has handled the matter efficiently, clearing the decks, but he has gained clear decks at an exhorbitant cost; while our hero writes an unmailed letter to his former mistress, promising not to hate her, "for if I hated you now, how could I continue to love you in the past—and for me not to love you in the past would be an impoverishment beyond endurance." Neal has acquired such wisdom not from experience but from words, especially the words 'now' and 'past' and the minuets which they and a few genial conjunctions naturally devise. Even though he has been for many months a male form howling in jealousy, the pain of the jealousy has been eased by the expressiveness of the howl. He is our scapegoat ("all I have pondered in malice, someone, coming after me, will consider comfortably") but a goat's cry is a comfort to the goat. Meanwhile (and to resume) John Neal longs for his beloved Florence, taken from him by his rival Anthony, dauntingly successful in money and love. Then there is Genevieve, inadequate substitute for Florence; Genevieve of whom John reported that "she could satisfy every need in me but the need of someone else." Two further characters have qualities but no names: one, a suicide, John's parasite, who lives some of John's vicarious life: the other, named only as Alter Ego, John's secret sharer. Add a few places, houses, landscapes, a city (New York), a wooden policeman standing outside a cigar-store, and sundry strangers, and the play has enough players to fill a bare stage.

But the players hardly matter, or so Burke has asserted. He reports that he first tried to write a novel by choosing characters, events and a story to direct them, but he failed to make them do anything, so he started afresh, consulting this time the nature of his inclination rather than the conventional requirements of a novel. He decided that he had no particular talent for writing conventional novels, but that his real talent ran to certain moods or tones of expression. "Lamentation, rejoicing, beseechment, admonition, sayings, and invective—these seemed to me central matters, while a plot in which they might occur seemed peripheral, little more than a pretext, justifiable not as 'a good story' but only insofar as it could bring these six characteristics to the fore." A writer may pretend to rage simply because his talent favors long sentences. Open Burke's novel at any page and you will find sentences like these, in which John Neal refers to his companions:

> *These are among my band, as is the young woman who, though living in dissolute company and herself somewhat dissolute, persisted in chastity. Many ribald and recondite explanations were offered for her conduct, but I felt that she rightly saw in virtue her one distinction.*

'Virtue' and 'distinction' are deployed as though they featured in a rhyming couplet, we read this prose as we read the verse of Pope or Swift, where the lines are transportation systems for the energies consigned from the crucial words. 'Distinction' means not only distinction from the woman's companions but from her own true, dissolute self, she is by her virtue an object of interest to herself ('she rightly saw') as to her associates. Burke despises Kleenex prose and is sufficiently uncapitalistic to think obsolescence unplanned or planned a misfortune, a vice of style. So he gives his John Neal sentences which sound like quotations from an extremely

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ironic text. The risk they run is that of being so intrinsically memorable that they float free from their contexts and rise to an independent life. Burke has designated the style of his novel as periwig, but the word is inadequate because it diverts attention from the lonely, twisted hero who deploys it. It is a studied prose, the sentences are constantly aware of themselves as sentences, but John Neal is weird enough to be at home among these words and too weird to be at home in more casual utterances. This accounts for the fact that Neal is more than the sum of his sentences, even though he claims and his author agrees that he is exactly that sum and not a whit more. He is more, I maintain, because the sentences are such that the reader fills the gaps between them with lonely, twisted qualities in addition to those officially claimed. John Neal becomes, therefore, what Burke insists he gave up trying to make him: a character in a novel.

I am surprised and disappointed that *Towards a Better Life* is not on everyone's lips, though of course I declare that all is not yet lost. There is no obstacle. Readers who have learned to negotiate the diverse perils of Mann, Kafka, and Beckett should be ready to run the risk of Burke. He is a famous critic, man of letters, an occasional and occasionally dazzling poet, and in one lonely instance, whether he likes the designation or not, a novelist.

Denis Donoghue

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The Back of the Book

Beauty to Vélazquez

"The Maids of Honor" (Las Meninas) was painted by Diego Vélazquez in 1656, four years before his death. Initially called "the family picture," the work consists of members of the Spanish royal household, including a large restful dog and Vélazquez himself, most of whom are staring forward, with one look or another. The central figure is the Infanta Margarita being offered a red rose by one of the attendant maids. The other maid stands slightly behind and to the right of the Infanta; and behind her, huddled in strange intimacy are the Infanta's duenna, wearing a nun's headdress, and a gentleman in attendance on the royal family. On the steps in the background is a palace guard about to leave the huge room.

Vélazquez stands before his canvas, less than half of the back of which we see. The canvas must be eight feet high, the right magnitude for his subjects, Queen Mariana and Philip IV. We do not see the monarchs directly, however; their portrait on the artist's canvas is reflected in a vertical rectangular mirror hanging on the back wall. In the lower right hand corner stand two dwarfs, one with the face of a little delicate girl; the other deformed and looking less monstrous than she might in a velvet gown of different shades of green.

The history of this famous painting, including the identification of court figures, a commentary on the work as it has passed through different periods of taste, and an illuminating discussion of technique are presented in *Vélazquez* (Viking; $45) by José Gudiol, a book as beautiful as it is learned. As Gudiol tells us, the painting is about kings, the human form, and the art of composition (Vélazquez, it is said, could paint the air). But "The Maids of Honor" seems also to be about beauty itself—to have and share beauty, and to define it as well.

Every figure in the room is arresting; the young maids poised in eager service to the Infanta; the glazed supernatural look on the face of the court gentleman—is he really listening to the confidence proffered by the duenna. The guard at the rear seems anxious. The pretty dwarf is either about to pet or taunt the dog. The other looks up, as does Vélazquez who may be studying the left side of his canvas, but could be looking aside of it: at the posing monarchs, or at us. Most of the figures, including the reflected images of Philip and Mariana, are in fact looking at us. We do not simply view this chamber; we are about to enter it, as strangers, which may account for the anxious stance of the palace guard, and his interrupted exit.

Here are kings, queens, artists, children, dogs, freaks, soldiers, servants, people of God, and ourselves, whomever we may be, caught in the castle, going about our business. We know what the business of the others is, but what is ours? A thief brings wariness to the painting; a coward contempt. Or do we bear important news for the court? Does the duenna whisper about our good looks or fierce reputation? Everyone must of course stand still in a painting, but here no one other than Philip and Mariana is actually posing—and they are not posing for the painting we see. The rest, ourselves included, are stopped in action by an emotional decision, frozen as we are because we suddenly have come into each other's presence.

Taking life at a point of such high tension, we know that almost anything can follow; in the next split-second the Infanta may rush to hug us, or the dog may go for our throat, or the child's. Or nothing visible might happen too, and whatever reactions the figures have toward each other may stay concealed and civilized. But we also know that that next split-second never comes. This is art, not social life.

Since we know that all the problems raised in those beautifully various faces (your face as well) will not be resolved or elucidated beyond the present moment, we turn to the maker of the art—to Vélazquez or the left—if only to confirm that this tension may be satisfying inherently. But what does Vélazquez give us?—himself, the artist, *also* trying to make sense and order of life, conveying men and monarchs to a flat board. The process repeats itself in the object; our acts of mind fling back at us from the source of provocation.

There is art in "The Maids of Honor" but it comes by way of reflection, as in Plato's mirror. We might say with Plato that the stillness and distance of the figures on the canvas prove art not equal to its subjects; Philip and Mariana, after all, are only assumed to be present; Vélazquez has not painted both his models and the reflections of his models in the same work, perhaps to avoid comparisons. But thinking of the other figures in the painting—so clear and vital—we could turn Plato on his head, and say that because the king and queen

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can only see themselves on the canvas by reflection, that here life holds the mirror to art, in order to see itself ideally.

As for us visitors, our relationship to the king and queen is difficult. They are alive and near us, but on entering we who are alive and near them see only the mirror that shows the canvas that contains a representation of objects held in the eye of a man who sees what we cannot. All we see (and trust) is that man and the reflection of his work; but by this we sense reality. Reality and art contend for our attention, approval, faith. *We* could be in that mirror just as well, doing our own tacit striving for the proper light.

"About suffering they were never wrong the Old Masters." Here, as in Brueghel's "Icarus," is a kind of suffering—not of the imagination in one grand and unnoted gesture, but of the imagination in its continual inward war against the necessity and potential error (perhaps destructiveness) of the real world. I believe this is beauty at its height—the arrangement of life in extreme variety, free and interdependent, testifying to fluidity and process, at once at ease and deeply troubled, possibly in danger. It is a life that lives not only for itself but for the spectator at the door, providing choices that appear esthetic and are in fact moral.

This conception of beauty, though made up of particulars like "The Maids of Honor," is abstract and general. Not enough to admire the arrangement of potentially clashing elements, one must know why one likes what one sees, a question that probes at least as deep as politics, and often to the fire down below. Liberals and conservatives can trace their preferences to esthetics; so can businessmen, sports fans, comedians, you—even editors. There is beauty, liberalism and editorial judgment in the Vélazquez painting—in the mixture of stations and tones, the equality of individual prominence, the mutual need of the figures, and the potential for change. Yet it goes further.

Looking at "The Maids of Honor," as at works of all art, one must see everything, even that which technically is out of sight: the king and queen, and the room above the chamber as well. The figures are covered with light, but they occupy only the bottom half of the painting. From midpoint upward Vélazquez's room grows terribly dark, so dark at the top that we barely make out the fixtures on the ceiling or the two works of art on the panels above the mirror. It is hard to tell if the darkness is green, brown, blue, purple or black. Yet its presence in the room is at least as dominant as the 12 living creatures (you make 13) framed beneath and against it.

This darkness is ours. Whatever propels these lives we have rests in that dark. It draws us into the chamber, makes us part of the scene, and defies narrative explanation. It has its own terms of reference, and doesn't care if it goes unacknowledged. Most important perhaps, it indicates by its mass and shapelessness the proper significance of the problems raised in the lower half of the painting—that they are equally urgent and repetitious.

"The Maids of Honor" is beautiful, or so I say. Yet the painting itself suggests that the question of beauty is up for grabs. The artist-figure Vélazquez thinks he knows what beauty is as he paints the royal couple. They on the other hand think of themselves as beautiful, not art. The pampered Infanta knows that she is beautiful, but no more so to the real Vélazquez than the dwarfs, whom he also made. And aren't we beautiful, too, standing at the door, drawing all that attention?

These are not merely riddles of perspective. We suppose that beauty needs nothing but itself to explain it, which is fine for beauty, but leaves us in the cold. Here beauty re-creates itself by deliberately unnerving the beholder, and even fights itself for its own worth. Courage is the least of what it took for Vélazquez to do all that.

Roger Rosenblatt

Correspondence

The Three C's

To the editors:

If our "ally" in the Middle East had behaved less irresponsibly during and since its occupation (with US complicity) of Arab lands in 1947 and if our government could accept the reality of diminishing energy reserves and simply set about to conserve and control exploitation of our own present and potential supplies, the goal of Middle Eastern peace might not now be so tenuous as to oblige us to sit upon the powder keg for the foreseeable future.

One suspects, moreover, that the US interest in the situation is less in the abstract wish for peace or even in minimizing Russia's presence in that area (we could, for example, have achieved a similar purpose in selling them less wheat) than in the third prong of our concern (to quote from your article "Brokered Peace", *TNR* Sept. 13) to "give American corporations the advantage over competing commercial interests in the Arab world".

Whatever the moral differences between our projected buffering of the present hostile borders and our more openly partial presence in Vietnam, the probable outcome is much the same. As your approving stance suggests, lets shout down our Cassandras and join the ranks of commercial-corporate-cold-war America. Three cheers for our side!

Elsie Bergman
Seattle, Washington

Renovating Idea

To the editors:

Housing may well be "the sickest sector of a sick economy ("The Obsolete Home," *TNR* Sept. 6)." However, as one with both a personal and professional interest in historic preservation and neighborhood conservation, I feel that the author is most unnecessarily pessimistic. The writer's single concession to a movement waxing vigorous in scores of American cities—"Will the high cost of new construction make rehabilitation more attractive, slowing the rate of deterioration of older homes and apartments?"—is barely adequate. The answer to this is an unqualified "yes."

I question the author's assumption that vast numbers of new houses and apartments need to be built at all. A look at our central cities confirms that this nation possesses a housing resource that has been too long overlooked in the American quest for the new house on the quarter acre lot. In my opinion, the severe drop in the number of housing starts may well be one of the distinct blessings of the current economic slump.

For the past two years I have watched my neighborhood on Cleveland's near West Side blossom from a poor enclave of badly run-down old frame and brick houses to a neighborhood that now boasts a healthy and interesting diversity of cultures and incomes, one with a definite pride in itself and what is has become. Paint-up and fix-up efforts abound. Young people are returning to the richness of city life unavailable in

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sterile, standardized suburbs. Older, longtime residents of this area have rediscovered the special value of their homes in a neighborhood suddenly grown attractive to outsiders. The physical amenities of an old city neighborhood—interesting architecture, houses of sensible size on small, almost carefree lots, convenient neighborhood shopping facilities—are just some of the drawing cards.

Throughout Cleveland, and throughout most American cities, thousands of houses in older neighborhoods stand ready for rehabilitation and reuse. *That* is the solution to a nationwide housing shortage, *not* the continued abandonment of center-city neighborhoods in favor of tract development after tacky tract development. Indeed, one must not overlook two additional benefits that will accrue through a revitalization of the housing stock that already exists: first, a return of population to areas that enjoy convenient access to public transportation will help conserve energy; and secondly, our environment will benefit, from the improved appearance of restored and revitalized city neighborhoods, to the natural environment that would be saved from bulldozers and seemingly endless suburban sprawl. . . .

Carol Poh Miller
Cleveland, Ohio

Green Stuff

To the editors:

In "The Perils of Public Interest Law" (*TNR*, Sept. 30)" Mark Green reported that "The litigation wing of Tax Analysts and Advocates and the Media Access Project have run out of money."

As executive director of Media Access Project, I wish to inform you that your statement, as it concerns us, is completely inaccurate. We have never run out of money. In fact, our staff was increased in August and will increase again in October. Like all public interest law firms, there was a time when we anxiously awaited decisions on our grant requests. Thanks to the Markle Foundation and the Rockefeller Family Fund, which renewed their prior year's grants, and now to The Shalan Foundation, our coffers were well healed several months ago before we reached any crisis situation . . .

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Harvey J. Shulman
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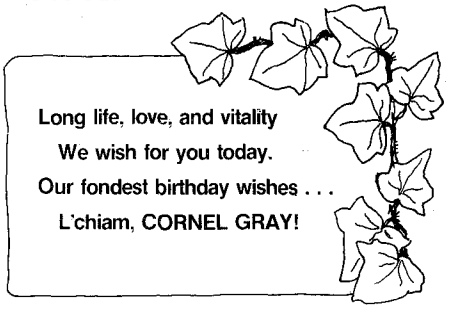

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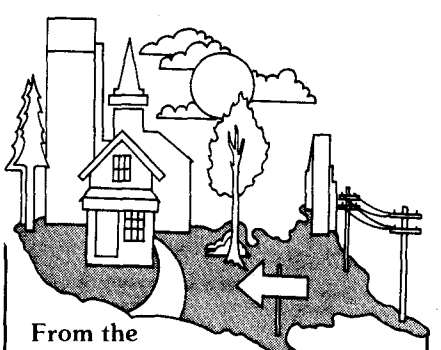

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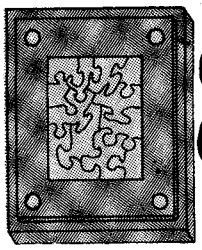

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